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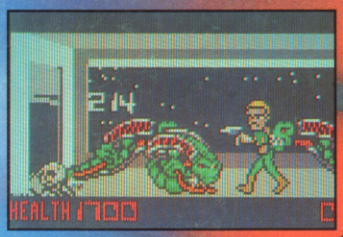

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Hot rod it through city streets in
ROADBLASTERS.....42

■ Atari Lynx ■ NES ■

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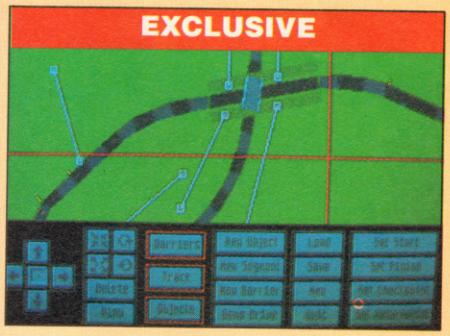

Sensational 3-D thrills and spills
HARD DRIVIN' 2 48

■ Amiga ■ Atari ST ■ IBM PC ■

IT'S HERE!.....80

Nintendo's explosive new console, the Super Famicom, has finally been released. Gawp at the tech specs, gasp at the games, get over to page 80 now!

ISSUE FOUR

EDITOR Richard Monteiro. **STAFF WRITERS** Julian Boardman, Les Ellis. **CONTRIBUTORS** Jason Holborn. **JAPAN CORRESPONDENT** Shintaro Kanaoya. **USA CORRESPONDENT** Hank Weinsnotter. **ADVENTURE CORRESPONDENT** Paul Rigby. **COIN-OP CORRESPONDENT** Suzi Uki. **DESIGN & LAYOUT** Ian Chubb, Rebecca Owen **PRODUCTION & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR** Jonathan Rignall. **ADVERTISEMENT SALES EXECUTIVES** John Riding, Mike Hayes. **GROUP ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER** Judith Bamford. **GROUP PROMOTIONS EXECUTIVE** Richard Eddy. **MAIL ORDER** Carol Kinsey. **SUBSCRIPTIONS** Caroline Edwards. **PUBLISHER** Franco Frey.

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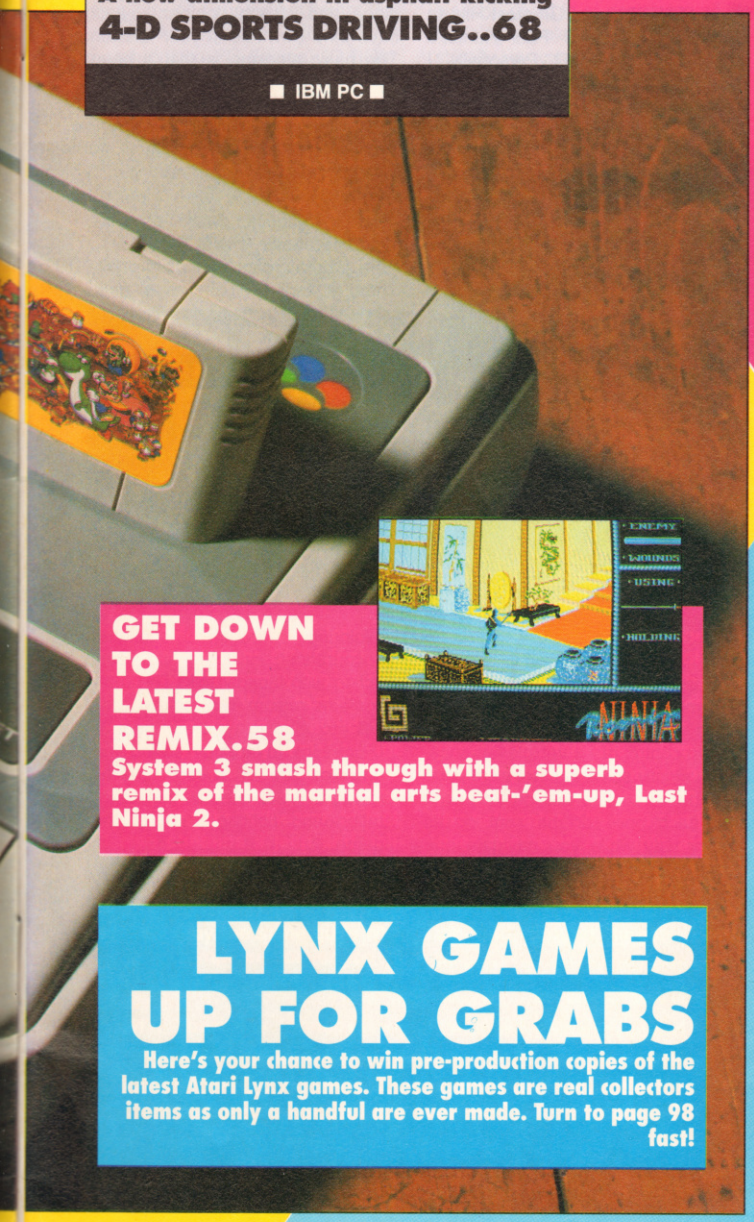
RAZE

A new dimension in asphalt kicking
4-D SPORTS DRIVING..68

■ IBM PC ■



GET DOWN TO THE LATEST REMIX.58
System 3 smash through with a superb remix of the martial arts beat-'em-up, Last Ninja 2.

LYNX GAMES UP FOR GRABS
Here's your chance to win pre-production copies of the latest Atari Lynx games. These games are real collectors items as only a handful are ever made. Turn to page 98 fast!

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FAST FORWARD

GROUND ZERO

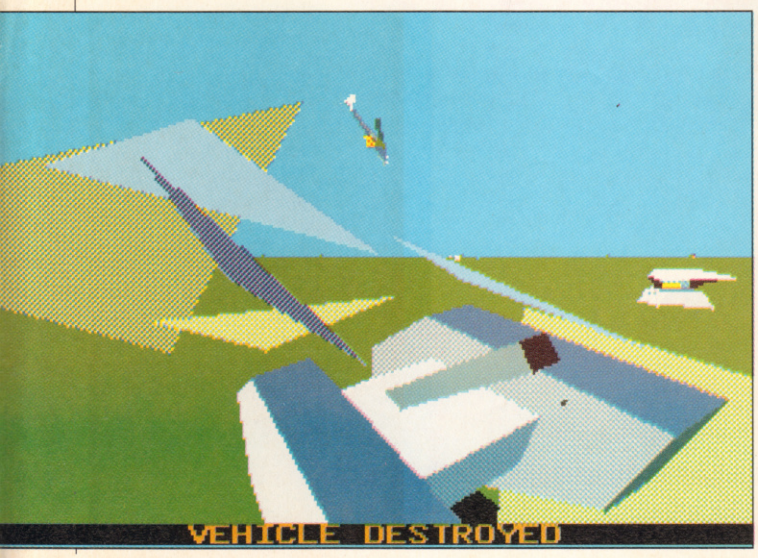
There's always plenty going on in Liverpool. If it isn't the football team thrashing some lowly fourth division club, then it's those Psygnosis boys getting up to mischief. Les Ellis put on his Shadow of the Beast T-shirt and went in search of more clothing

There's so much going on at Psygnosis, it's hard to know where to begin. So let's work in alphabetical order, which means we should start with... A. Now then, A stands for *Armour-Geddon*.

The programmers of *Armour-Geddon* were to be found arguing over which tape was to be listened to during the demonstration of *'Geddon*. Such are the dilemmas faced by programmers everyday of their lives. Was it to be Ed Scio's tape of Neighbours' Greatest Hits (a very short tape) or Paul Hunter's tape of Slade Live? Personally, I couldn't tell the difference, so we settled down for a tour of the game.

Just to give you an indication of its size, *Armour-Geddon* is a *Mercenary*-like game played over a grid measuring 80kms square. It features solid 3-D graphics and puts you in control of six vehicles at once. Well, strictly speaking, not all at once as no-one can be that omnipresent, but each one can be sent on its merry way while you navigate one from your first-person perspective in the cockpit.

The six vehicles – heavy tank, light tank, hovercraft, helicopter, fighter plane and stealth bomber – each have their own role in your mission. The basic storyline is that a beam



DOUBLE SIDED

Hiding under a couple of well-groomed heavy metal hair styles, the programmers of *Obitus* were hard at work. Well, they were until they thought that no-one was watching them.

While you could not describe *Obitus* as an RPG, there are definitely some roleplaying elements in there. But neither could *Obitus* be described as an out and out arcade game, yet you do a large amount of fighting. My, what a quandary.

However, the game, which has been in development for almost a year, certainly looks like an RPG. In it you play a man searching and exploring through locations, encountering evildoers and interacting with friendly folk. The map contains regions like forests, castles etc, all displayed with neat 3-D graphics. In fact both sound and graphics are of a high quality, mixed to great effect in the exploration and fighting parts of the game.

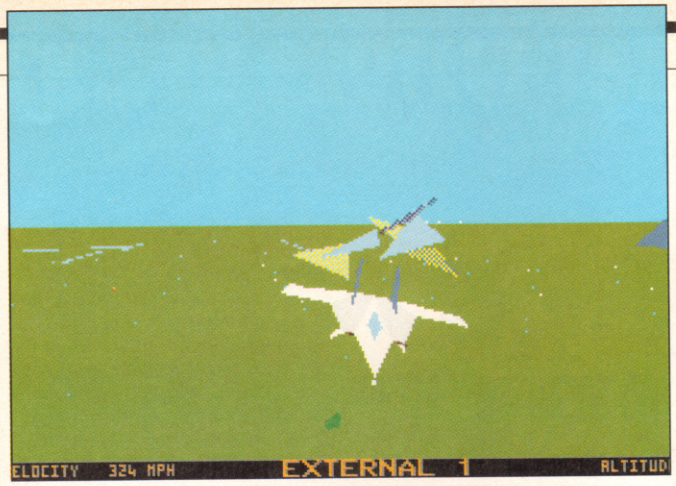
Obitus should be out very shortly on both Amiga and Atari ST.

CRAZY PEOPLE

The two guys behind *Armour-Geddon* are Ed Scio and Paul Hunter. At 22, Ed is the baby of the team. He started writing games on the Dragon 32, and moved on to better things with games like *Airball* and *International Soccer*. However, he now wants to be known for writing serious games. Ed was at pains to point out that his A grade A-level at computers was being put to serious work. His fave game at the moment is *F/A 18 Interceptor*, even if he can't finish the last mission...

Paul Hunter is the grandfather of the team at the ripe old age of 25. He started out working on 8-bit games like *Space Harrier* and *Battleships* for Elite and then moved up to the world of 16-bit computers with the self-proclaimed classic *Jug*. He is also a big *Interceptor* fan and frequently brags about his low level fly-bies over the Golden Gate Bridge – who doesn't?

Looking forward to future projects, the lads hope to work on a flight simulator (surprise, surprise), and continue doing games in a 3-D environment (like an office, perhaps?). Good luck to 'em.



SILENT PSYGNOSIS

It's well known that Psygnosis are up to some pretty freaky things on compact disc. But could this green journo extract any information where others had failed – could he heck! Psygnosis showed me a few neat things, but told be to keep schtum. All I can reveal is that the Liverpool boys are considering work on the PC Engine CD-ROM (for which they are already doing *Shadow of the Beast*), FM Towns (yum, yum), CDTV (when it comes out) and CD-I (if it comes out). They are not saying that they're actually doing anything on any of the machines, just that they're looking at them – very helpful, thanks!

weapon capable of destroying all life is being developed. Once this monstrosity is complete there will be untold destruction on a scale rarely seen before. Your job is to explore the planet and find the parts of a bomb that are strewn across its surface. Once found, they can be assembled and used to destroy the beam weapon.

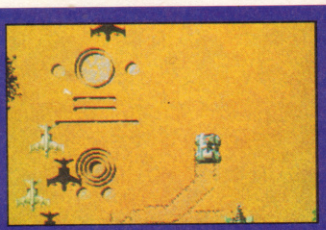
The game features internal and external views from any of your squad's vehicles and a neat multilink option which enables two players to take part simultaneously via their own Amiga or Atari ST. This brings a totally new element into it as you can either team up to find the beam weapon or fight against each other for sole domination.

Sole domination comes at a small price and will cost you just £24.99 when the game is released in January.

SWIV

STORM/SALES CURVE ■
VERTICAL SHOOT-'EM-UP

Les Ellis wraps himself in silk and gets worms?!



The jeep shows just how all those mysterious corn circles were really made – flying saucers indeed.

Now, before we start, let's get one thing straight. *SWIV* does not stand for Silkworm IV. No way, no sir, no how. Well that's what Storm are saying to avoid any extra royalty payments to the holders of the *Silkworm* rights. Strangely, though, it looks and plays very like *Silkworm*. In fact, it also contains a jeep and helicopter. But it couldn't be related to *Silkworm* in any way, could it? Well, considering it's programmed by the same guys who did the computer conversion of *Silkworm*, similarities could be forgiven.

SWIV basically consists of everything the programmers, Random Access (also responsible for *Ninja Warriors*), wanted to put into the original *Silkworm* but couldn't because the game had to be a direct conversion of the arcade hit.

Unlike the original *Silkworm*, the game doesn't have multiple levels but consists of one absolutely huge level divided into 16 different zones. The whole level, vertically scrolling and viewed from above, is made up of 107 screens so don't think this is going to be a five-minute-wonder.

SWIV features one- or two-player simultaneous action with one player taking control of the jeep and the other grappling with the helicopter. The jeep can jump over obstacles and spin around to shoot any ground targets while the helicopter can move within the sky space and shoot air and ground targets. Both players can also get power-ups to build up their awesome arsenal.

The players move through the zones in this order: Ghost Town, Desert, Airstrip, Sea, Grassland, Corn field, Future Zone, Dried up Riverbed, Lake, Forest, Spaceship's Graveyard, Future Zone 2, Arctic sea, Snowfield, Volcanic Lava Field and Sci-Fi Zone. Just enough to keep the intrepid bullet 'n' bomb blaster going.

The game really comes into its own in two-player mode where you team up in your fight against the common enemy. The sheer size of the level and volume of different opponents (all beautifully constructed by artist Ned Langman) you encounter make this game utterly compulsive.

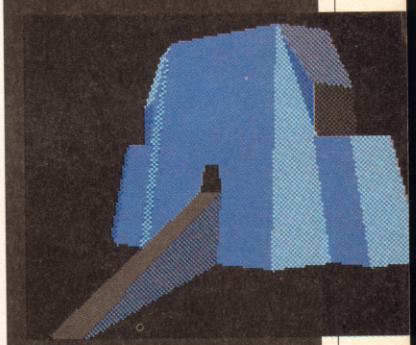
The super "follow-up" to *Silkworm* will be released in January on the Amiga and Atari ST for the giveaway price of not 40, not 30, not even 25 quid, but for the meagre price of £24.95.

PREVIEW POSTSCRIPT

★ Following hot on the heels of last month's Rave, *Wing Commander*, Mindscape have announced the imminent release of a *Wing Commander* mission disk called *The Secret Missions*. IBM PC owners can get it on 3.5 or 5.25-inch disk for £14.99.

★ The lowly Atari 7800 sees its catalogue swell in time for Christmas with *Alien Brigade* (£12.99) heading the field. It's an *Operation Wolf* style shoot-'em-up and will support both joypad and lightgun.

★ Interesting news from Domark this month as they announce the *3-D Construction Kit*. It will allow you to construct your own 3-D creations and promises both educational and leisure uses. Unfortunately you'll have to wait until April '91.



Building in 3-D from the comfort of your own home in Domark's arty April release.

★ Sierra On-Line are promising the best graphics ever seen on a home computer (we've heard that before) in their new release *King's Quest V*. The graphics use hand drawn paintings and real life animation of real actors. It's out soon(ish) and will be available on IBM PC (VGA £44.99, EGA £39.99) only.

★ Domark have announced the release of yet another Tengen coin-op conversion. *STUN Runner* should be out before Christmas on Amiga, Atari ST (£24.99 each) and IBM PC (£29.99). *STUN Runner* is just the sort of futuristic racing game you could do with for Christmas.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Hewson haven't released an original game for months and now they've come up with two little corkers. Cole Trickle couldn't believe his luck as he found the only parking space in Milton, Oxfordshire

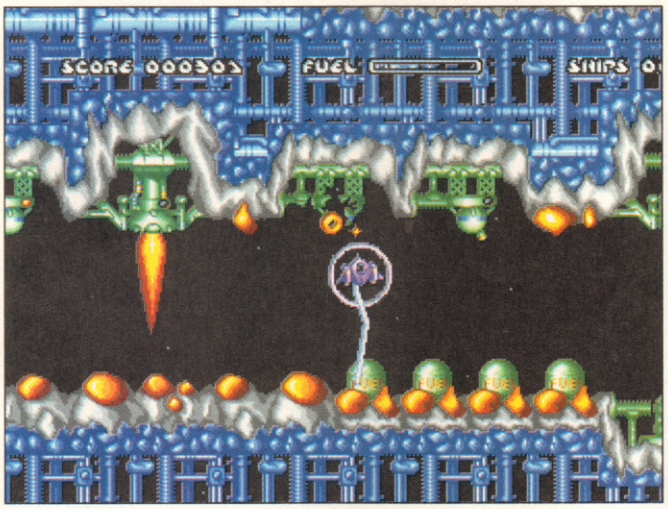
ZARATHRUSTA

There was once a game that captured the heart of every single C64 owner. The game, *Thrust*, programmed by one-hit-wonder Kevin Smith, was to go down in the annals of history as an original game that could never be bettered.

But, around a year ago, Hewson received a little package through the letter box that contained a 16-bit version of *Thrust*, programmed for personal enjoyment by *Thrust* fan, Peter Verswyvelen. Hewson soon got on the blower to Firebird and original author Kevin Smith and got their permission to produce a "Super Thrust" game. They got it, in fact Smith was flattered that someone had remembered his old budget hit of yesteryear.

Of course, everyone in the software development department at Hewson was a *Thrust* fan too so ideas for improvements and additions to the original weren't slow coming.

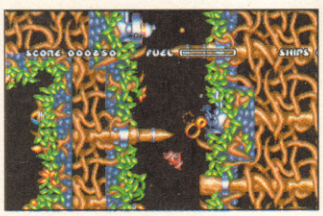
Despite containing numerous visual improvements and gameplay enhancements, *Zarathrusta* is still *Thrust* at heart. The orb, which has to be rescued from within a planet, is still a bugger to control with the planet's changing gravity pulling you all over the place. On later levels you even get a basket to carry the orb in, so swinging the ship around a corner of the landscape will jiggle the basket attached to your ship's rear. Drop the orb and you'll have to pick it up again from the rugged landscape.



Fuel is running low so you'd better pick those canisters if you're to escape from Zarathrusta.

Of course, there are planet bases always trying to shoot you away, fuel has to be picked up, and the gravity of each of the 50 planets changes from one to the next – even within planets.

Zarathrusta looks set to revive its cult roots and become the hit of 1991 when it is released on Amiga only in February. Look out for a review next issue.



Zarathrusta's graphics are an immense improvement over Thrust's, and the original gameplay is still there.

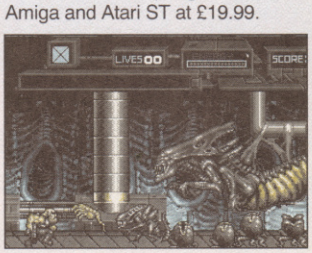
RUBIK'S CUBE

Hewson's latest foray, *Rubicon*, takes you to the year 2011 and puts you on Koala Island. Months after a major chemical disaster, the island has turned into a breeding ground for humungous mutants. Leaving the mutants alone with all that high-tech equipment lying around would be very dangerous to the rest of the world, so there's only one thing for it, someone must go to the island and clear the place of the creatures.

On arriving at the island you soon realise that you may be too late – the mutants have already got themselves a large assortment of weapons. Trouble is soon to follow.

The 16-bit versions of *Rubicon* take you through eight two-layer parallax scrolling levels. Each level is packed with monsters large and small, each one requiring a pair of nimble feet and a sharp eye if you are to venture past them. It's constant blasting all the way from start to finish.

You'll be able to get hold of *Rubicon* in the spring of 1991 on Amiga and Atari ST at £19.99.



Can you clear the island of mutants in Hewson's latest arcade adventure Rubicon?

PREVIEW POSTSCRIPT

★ Electronic Arts are releasing a whole stack of stuff over the silly season. *Bard's Tale III – Thief of Fate* should prove a steal at £29.99 for the IBM PC, also *Hard Nova* with similar details will be hard to resist. Meanwhile, Atari ST owners will now be able to play the classic Amiga flight sim *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0* which is now available for £24.99.

Hard Nova is one of the many Electronic Arts games to come out over Christmas.

★ Accolade have just announced the long-awaited Atari ST conversion of the great Amiga driving game, *Test Drive II* (£24.99). Even better news is that two scenery disks and two car disks will also be released. The scenery disks are *California Challenge* and *European Challenge*, the car disks are *Super Cars* and *Muscle Cars*, costing £11.99. The Amiga conversion of *Test Drive III* should be out in spring.

"I'm charging you for doing 65 in 55mph zone." "Can't you make it 75, officer? I'm trying to sell the car."

★ For those of you who like stupidly high phone bills, a *RoboCop 2* phone game has just been set up by The Phone Program Company. The game takes the form of a radio play where you make all the vital decisions. Rates are 33p per minute off peak, 44p per minute peak rate. Here's the number and get permission from the phone owner before you ring it: 0898 345678.

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Robocop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value.

Detroit is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together!

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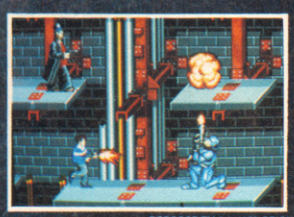

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BIG IN

Having forgotten to mention the Super Famicom TV, Shintaro Kanaoya contemplated committing seppuku, but decided he couldn't manage the spelling. He then attempted hari-kari, but decided it wasn't the Japanese thing to do. Hara-kiri seemed like the only honourable thing, but then he remembered the Tera, Jackie Chan and those Bangkok nights with Suzy Uki.

Wotcha, the name's Chan, Jackie Chan. I prefer Chinamen shaken and stirred. How about you?

Minasama yokoso. You've had the Master System, the Mega Drive lurking in the shop is almost within financial reach, and the Game Gear will find its way into your pocket as soon as it becomes officially available. But now, console cravers, mightier than the Mega Drive, grander than the Giga Drive (see Entertainment USA on page 14)... it's the Tera.

The tera is a number larger than mega and giga combined. It is, so they say, 10,000,000,000,000, which is a lot of noughts in anyone's tera. But what is the Tera? In short, it's a machine developed jointly by Sega and IBM that can work in any of three modes: PC, Mega Drive and Tera. Without further ado, here's Uncle Shintera's Q and A session.

Q: What are the machine's technical specifications?

A: Since the Tera was developed jointly between Sega and IBM Japan, it is, naturally, IBM PC compatible. And because of Sega's involvement, the machine is Mega Drive compatible too. For technophiles here's the low down.

Resolution: 320 x 200 to 640 x 480 (PC); 320 x 224 (Mega Drive)

Onscreen colours: 4 (PC CGA), 16 (PC EGA), 256 (PC VGA); 64 (Mega Drive)

Palette: 260,000 (PC VGA); 512 (Mega Drive)

Sound: one-channel buzz (PC); six-channel FM, three-channel PSG, one-channel PCM (Mega Drive)

Processor: 10MHz 80286 (PC); 8MHz 68000 (Mega Drive)

Q: What is the unique Tera mode?

A: It's simply the machine's ability to use the capabilities of both the PC and Mega Drive simultaneously. Hence, it's possible to use the Mega Drive's astounding sound capabilities with the huge palette and high screen resolution of the PC's VGA mode.

Q: The Mega Drive is to have a CD-ROM by the Summer of this year as revealed in RAZE issue 1 – will such a device be available for the Tera?

A: A Tera CD-ROM is in the pipeline – however, it'll only appear six months after the Mega Drive CD-ROM. The exciting thing about the Tera CD-ROM player is that it will run both Mega Drive and PC CD-ROM software.

Q: Yum, yum! But when can we expect to see the Tera and how much will it cost?

A: The Tera's planned release date is some time between April and June. Several models will be available – the most basic costing £400 and coming with two 3.5-inch floppy disks and 1Mbyte of memory.

Right, that's the Tera. It sounds very agreeable to me. Of course, if Nintendo were to do the same with the Super Famicom, the Tera would be Tera-fied.

DO ME A FAVOUR

As I seem to be dealing with things Sega, I might as well carry on in the same fashion. The game causing most excitement in Japan on the Mega Drive is Shining and Darkness, the *Dungeon Master* clone that far surpasses the original. There are many more locations and characters than in *Dungeon Master*. It's big, bold and beautiful – and I'm not talking about the size of my excitement when I visit Suzy Uki.

Shadow Dancer will be coming at you soon. It's a contrived sequel to *Super Shinobi* (known in the UK as *Revenge of Shinobi*). You might remember the Shadow Dancer as one of the cruddy end-of-level guardians in *Super Shinobi.* Well it seems he's got a cartridge of his own. The similarities between the two games are considerable. Weapons, magic, outfits – the lot. For a beat-'em-up with little difference, *Shadow Dancer* could have you doing your "who's bad!" cries.

Don't miss *Hard Drivin'*. Better and faster than the 16-bit home computer versions and completely bug free. A game of danger, intrigue and suspense. Not *Hard Drivin'*, silly, but *Castle of Illusion.* You participate in a seven-level arcade adventure through dark forests, raging seas and mysterious castles. The cause? To rescue your girlfriend abducted by a malicious witch. Your lady friend's name is *Minnie*. And, yes, you're *Mickey Mouse.* So it's off to sail the seven seas and all that in your cute red shorts with yellow buttons. All together: "Hey, Mickey, you're so fine, you're so fine. Hey, Mickey!"

The £400 Tera is a joint venture between Sega and IBM Japan. It's a PC and Mega Drive rolled into one.

Get this for a seriously silly title: *The Great Turbo Adventurous Voyage.* That's the English translation; you really don't want to know the Japanese. Anyhow, the game features a lad in a red cape and turban, yellow shorts and a blue shirt. He runs, jumps and flies around a cute landscape and enters into fisticuffs with enemies.

PALM-TOP PRETENDER

That's enough on the Mega Drive. Now a word from our sponsors.

"Ever felt bored on a plane? Hours until you reach your destination? The film showing is a Carry On and you

Julian's got a big hara.

JAPAN

MEGA DRIVE TOP TEN IN JAPAN

1. STRIDER
2. MOONWALKER
3. COLUMNS
4. INSECTOR X
5. THUNDER FORCE III
6. HELLFIRE
7. FERRIOS
8. THE GREAT WIRD
9. BATMAN
10. AFTERBURNER II

GAME BOY TOP TEN IN JAPAN

1. TETRIS
2. SUPER MARIOLAND
3. SA.GA
4. SD GUNDAM/SD LEGEND
5. GOLF
6. DR. MARIO
7. LEGEND OF DRACULA
8. NEMESIS
9. QIX
10. RED ARIMA

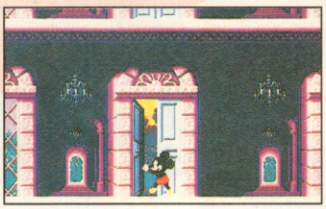
reckon you can't? Well, pick up your Game Gear, take out *Columns* and shaft it with *G-LOC* (loss of consciousness by G-force). Get in that fighter plane, blast those jets, lock-on, fire! Kill, kill, kill! Safe, healthy fun for all the family."

But if you prefer, there's *Dragon Crystal*, *Psycho World*, and *Devlish*.

NEC NIBBLES

I know there's that other column with the stupid name, but I feel I owe it to you to tell you what's really happening in the PC Engine world.

Jackie Chan is a Hong Kong-based martial arts actor. He's bumped bits with Suzy Uki on occasions (the swine) and has starred in Cannonball Run as the Ferrari Testarossa. Actually that was a lie, he played the martial arts guy. What else? His best performances have been in his native country where he scores over Jean Claude Van-Dame and Steven Seagal in that he has a sense of humour, does all his own stunts and could no doubt kick the blueberry pie out of the aforementioned lads.



Don't take the mickey out of this poor mouse. It's not his fault his mother dresses him up in bright red shorts and yellow plimsolls.

Jackie's fan club in Japan is huge, so it's unsurprising really that a game based on the man should appear.

Entitled rather unimaginatively *Jackie Chan,* the plot sees you chasing after a Chinese magician who's stolen your girlfriend. With eight deadly moves, Jackie must rescue his girlfriend and live happily ever after. The graphics are excellent, particularly the Jackie sprite.

An arcade game you might not have seen in the UK is *Cadash*. It's best described as an RPG arcade adventure. You have a choice of four characters: warrior, magician, priestess, ninja. No it's not *Gauntlet Remix*. You walk around knocking off bad guys, picking up experience points, using magic points, losing health points and so on.

Finally on the Engine, the continuing saga of *Ultra Box* – the CD-ROM that has about eight different activities for you to indulge in. This one contains the usual female ingredient hanging out at Club UB. You poor thing, you get to spend Xmas and Valentine's with one or three women.

Once again it's time for me to slip into my straightjacket and let those nice men in white coats take me to my cell. But before I go, let me leave you with a fine Japanese proverb passed down to me by my father: 'the longer your column the more pleasure it gives.' It's all too deep for me. Abayo.

Listen, mate, the sooner I can get out of this stupid pose, the sooner I can start dancing in the shadows.

RELEASE RUNDOWN

GAME GEAR

G-LOC – stunning combat flight simulator. Much like *Afterburner,* but faster.

MEGA DRIVE

Castle of Illusion – meet Mickey and Minnie in this cute and colourful platform game.

Shadow Dancer – ninja beat-'em-up. Loosely follows on from *Super Shinobi.*

Shining and Darkness – *Dungeon Master* clone, only bigger and better.

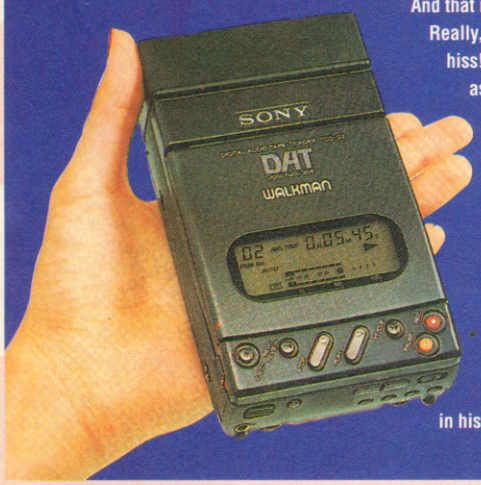
The Great Turbo Adventurous Voyage – silly name for a cute search and shoot platform adventure.

PC ENGINE

Jackie Chan – beat-'em-up featuring Japan's favourite martial arts film star.

Ultra Box – more smutt and soppiness on CD-ROM.

Remember DAT (digital audio tape) – the super recording medium that was supposed to wipe out CDs, but never quite took off? Well, there's something of a renaissance in Japan and DAT's back! The Sony DAT Walkman, able to record four hours of digital stereo, costs £400. The most expensive machines go up to £1200. And that in Japan is expensive. Really, £1200 for a little less hiss! It's about as sensible as Saddam. If you don't succumb to CD and believe DAT's for daydreamers, the Sony Portable CD-I player might excite. At £400 the player allows you to run the audio visual disks that Paul Rigby keeps on raving about in his Sights on CD column.



Do you think we should kiri it?

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150
120
LOCK ON 100
FIRE
EUROPE
3/1
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... and play and play and play.

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Then it wipes the floor with you, leaves you feeling like so much
dirty laundry and laughs in your face ... loser.**

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entertainment USA

After a few months break, the American column returns with Hank Weinsnotter taking charge of affairs

The Game Gear isn't officially available over here yet, but no sooner had we seen pictures of the Sega hand-held than details of the numerous amount of accessories started to flood in. Everyone's already aware of the TV tuner, but did you know about the Videolink cable (around £3) which allows eight people to play simultaneously. There's also a little cable that allows you to fix up your Game Gear to a video camera and use it as a little monitor (I guess this means you can fix up any video source to the Game Gear, even another computer!).

Batteries have always been a problem with hand-helds – I'm always running out on the 24th level of *Pengo* – so Sega have designed three clever ways of storing those batt cells and increasing play time. For around £15 you can get a rechargeable battery pack; a car cigarette lighter adapter costs around £10, and the essential AC power adapter will take just a few pounds from your pocket. Perhaps, now I'll be able to lend my hand-held to someone without having to worry about buying more new batteries when I get it back (have you ever known anyone to replace the batteries?). Incidentally, the power adaptor is the same as the Master System's, so MS owners will have a head start on us in the games released next year.

In total, eight games should be available for the Game Gear by January 1991: *Super Monaco GP, Columns, Pengo, Wonder Boy, Maze Syndrome, G-Loc, Baseball* and an unnamed RPG.

YOU MUST BE GIGING

As if the Sega Mega Drive wasn't enough, there are now rumours emanating from here and in Japan that Sega are developing a new console, codenamed the Giga Drive (Giga being a 1000 times bigger than Mega). Based on Sega's System 32 arcade board, rumours abound that the board is in the process of being shrunk to fit inside a Mega Drive-sized case. Advanced features are reported to include hardware scaling functions (to zoom into and out of the screen) as well as the ability to manipulate a larger number of more colourful characters! Is it Mega? No, it's Giga!

INSULT OF THE MONTH
Fans of the colour hand-helds Game Gear, Turbo Express/PC Engine GT and Lynx have christened Nintendo's monochrome baby the Lame Boy!

KONAMI IN THE EYE

Konami, one of the leading Nintendo developers, gave IBM a welcome piece of news recently during the Fall Software Publishers Association when Emil Heidkamp stated, "We really believe that somewhere down the line, maybe in two or three years, PC software and video game software (possibly on CD-ROM-based platforms) will come together on a collision course." Emil also said that he believed PC software would continue to be a large part of market.

Konami's Laser Scope headset allows Nintendo owners without the lightgun to play any of the gun games – it looks pretty mean too!

This only goes to show the urgency of Nintendo developers for Big N to release a CD-ROM machine for their own systems. Although the NES may have already missed the boat, it is rumoured that the whizkids at Nintendo have already set their sights on a CD-ROM for the 16-bit Super Famicon in the next couple of years.

Staying with Nintendo, there's nothing more annoying than playing *Duck Shoot* and having the gun conk out. It seems that Konami have also had this problem and as a result those wild guys of wonder and intrigue have come up with a little

RELEASE RUNDOWN

MASTER SYSTEM

Joe Montana Football – American football. Sega have obviously paid a lot of dollars for the big guy of football. Expect a trimmed down version of the Mega Drive version.

Pat Riley Basketball – slam dunk spectacular. Another conversion from the Mega Drive, still featuring those great close up shots of the dunking.

PC ENGINE

Battle Royale – wrestlemania. This is a wrestling game with a twist. It isn't a wrestling simulation – nor does it try to be one. Instead, hook up your turbo tap, plug in five controllers and get ready for a free for all inside the ring! No rules just pure mayhem as the winner is the last player to stay in the ring.

Bravoman – arcade beat-'em-up. The king of the double-jointed men is making his way to the Engine. Fight your way through 22 levels of land, sea and air battles using your special appendages (!) which stretch out to unusual proportions (!!). Punch and kick the evil Dr Bomb as you make your way to the Ninja Temples of death where the mastermind terror awaits.

GAME BOY

Godzilla – arcade platform. Play Big G himself and stomp around the 64 levels of this immense GB adventure.

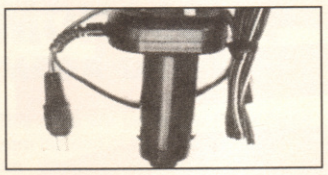
Lock 'n' Chase – Pac-Man clone. Chomp your way around six manic levels in this a-mazeing game from Data ast.

A BREACH TOO HARD

Mindcraft are not just distributing the Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC versions of Omnitrend's *Breach 2* in the States, but they have totally re-written the interface so that the game plays far easier. If you failed to complete the European version, try to get hold of the American version as there's a great end sequence that shouldn't be missed.

Another day, another dollar.

gadget called the Laser Scope. This wonderful piece of kit allows Nintendo owners to play all the zapper lightgun cartridges without the gun – using voice activation! Designed as a sleek, plastic headset with an over-eye target locator and microphone, the Laser Scope encourages greater interaction between player and game. Remove the over-eye locator and the headset becomes a pair of stereo headphones! Built into the headset is a sound enhancer which improves the normal Nintendo audio – you can even connect it to Game Boy. Konami plan to support the Laser Scope with a series of new games which take advantage of the fact that players can now double their fire power and shooting with the helmet and controller simultaneously! The Laser Scope, retailing for around £25, connects to Nintendo with one standard cord plug, allowing you to play up to 15 feet away



The cigarette lighter adaptor will allow play of the Game Gear in the car (providing your not driving!).

IMPORT

STRIDER

SEGA

■ ARCADE PLATFORM

Packed on an 8Mb cartridge, Capcom's *Strider* is an absolute cracker of a game. Displaying all six levels of the original arcade game, *Strider* is set in 2048 where the troubles between the USA and USSR have degenerated. You, Strider, must penetrate the Russian robotic forces in order to exterminate the leaders who have initiated the conflict.

After being dropped off outside one of the Russian fortresses, you immediately encounter fierce resistance. Armed with your lightning quick sabre, keen wits and gymnastic acrobatic skills you exit the fortress to the bitter cold mountains of Siberia where you encounter the sheer cliffs and killer attack dogs. All this only to reach another fortress whose entrance is guarded by Pong – a gigantic, full screen mechanical gorilla! Once inside, you battle through more baddies until you reach the jungle and two further intense levels. Phew!

One of the slickest MD games yet.

MEGA DRIVE

92%

SPACE 1889

PARAGON

■ SPACE RPG

About to be released by Paragon in the States, *Space 1889* is a RPG based upon the popular game by Game Designers' Workshop. It recreates the Solar System as envisaged by the scientific theories of the 19th century, and in the imaginations of Jules Verne, HG Wells, etc. Visit the canals of Mars and deal with warring Martians; captain modified sailing ships through the space ether; travel through the underground caverns of the Moon; encounter corrupt German conspirators and find the lost city of Atlantis – and, no doubt, make it home in time for Donahue! Features include five character parties with six attributes and 24 skills, including fisticuffs, theatrics and engineering. Over 100 locations on Earth alone; 500 non-player characters, each with their own personality; historic 19th century weapons, including 30 guns; nine close combat weapons, and four throwing weapons. This game is one meaty mother and will take more than your average Jim-Bob to get through it alive.

Get your history books out!

IBM PC

89%

RELEASE RUNDOWN

NINTENDO

Ultima-Avatar – strategy game. Derived from the computer version of *Ultima IV* you must first become an Avatar by mastering a code of eight virtues.

Yo Noid! – arcade game. The friendly looking character from the Domino's pizza commercials over here makes his video game debut. Noid is up against a city full of tricksters led by the evil Mr Green.

Little Nemo – arcade adventure. Journey to the land of wonder. Little Nemo receives an invitation to the castle in Slumberland. When he arrives he finds the King has been kidnapped!

Ultimate Basketball – arcade sports. Lace up your high-tops and get ready for some fast-foot action. One- or two-player with a seven-team tournament option. Substitutions, three-point shots, slam dunks, Michael Jordan, etc.

Dragon Warrior 2 – roleplaying game. The second in the popular series of *DW* RPGs from Enix. Four times larger than *DW1*. *DW2* begins 100 years after the first saga. Get your party together and search for Hargon the Sorceror.

MEGA DRIVE

Vette – sports car sim. Conversion of the Stateside hit from Spectrum Holobyte. Drive around the streets of San Francisco playing either the good guy or the bad – either way, get the the city limits pronto! Great vector graphics.

Wrestle War – wrestling antics. Grab your oppo by the nuts and swing him around the ring, then grab him by the ears and knee him in the face. Whoever said game characters provide good role models.

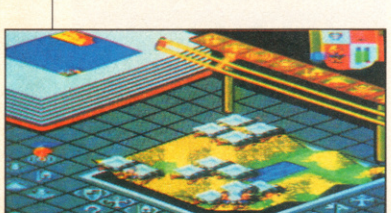
Lakers vs Celtics – basketball action. Replay the entire NBA playoffs. Each player has his own moves: Kareem has his skyhook, Jordan has his dunk.

Dick Tracy – arcade shoot-'em-up. As Dick "that's an interesting name" Tracy you must battle the mob and clear the city of violence. As for Madonna, these digitised pictures will make you Breathless.

SEGA CITY CITY CITY CITY

by Julian Boardman

Got a Sega? Plug into City, the only dedicated Sega column this side of the Milky Way for the Mega Drive, Master System and Game Gear. For the latest coverage of the country's favourite consoles stay right here. Thinking of buying any other console? Do me a favour...



Populous for the Master System. Ten times as many worlds but who's got the time to play them?

As ever there is loads happening on the UK's most happenin' machines. Before getting on to the fabulous new Game Gear, here is a run down of the releases for your machine over the next few months:

● Those of you who were stimulated by the preview of *SWIV* (page 7) will be pleased to know that The Sales Curve, its publishers, are trying to negotiate a deal to get it released on the Mega Drive. Oh well, what's one more shoot-'em-up between friends, eh?

GAME GEAR'S HERE!

Two months ago, our Japanese correspondent Shintaro Kanaoya gave us a run down of the Game Gear and mentioned the three games that would be available on its release: *Columns*, *Pengo* and *Super Monaco GP*. Raze can now bring you the definitive review of the machine and those three games.

First off, the machine. Aesthetically, it sports the rounded styling that Sony quite favours on its mid-range hi-fis. This is complemented by the rounded top of the cartridge which, when fitted into the back, makes a nice smooth and slick finish.

The 32 colours, out of a palette of 4096 on the 3.5-inch backlit LCD screen (larger than the Lynx), give plenty of scope for graphics to beat the Lynx at its own game.

It has a tiny speaker with a socket for optional stereo headphones but judging by the software so far, this is the machine only major drawback. For around £80 (in Japan) you can't really grumble, but when it comes over here in spring nearer the £130 price point, you're comparing it against the newly-priced Lynx which is a much more attractive machine to own.

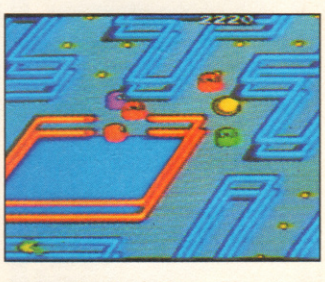
The multi-player adaptor allows up to eight players to con-

● Electronic Arts, those lovely people from Berkshire who have just released *Populous* and *Budokan* for the Mega Drive, have got three new titles lined up for release in the near future: *Sword of Sodan*, a hack and slash epic; *Battle Squadron*, a vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up; and *Zany Golf*, a review of which can be seen in last issue's budget section. They also have some hush-hush titles for next Easter. What I do know is that none of them will be *Flood*, which is strange because I would have thought that long haired Quiffy would have been a great character on the Mega Drive.

■ US Gold have even more titles planned for the Master System. They have *World Class Leaderboard*, *Heroes of Lance*, *Turbo Out Run* and *Kick Off* (!) planned for release early next year.

■ MicroProse, producers of everything you could ever want to be simulated and a wider range of product on the MicroStyle label (*Simulcra, Rick Dangerous*) have plans for releases on both the Master System and the Mega Drive. But as we went to press, actual titles were not forthcoming from their British offices. I'm not sure who I'd rather work for, MI5 or Sega.

■ Some of you may have heard of Tecmagik, a new label devoted to producing software for consoles. Both of their first two titles being released for the Master System. *Populous* is the first, making its 8-bit debut with ten times as many worlds as the 16-bit original (so there!). Not only that, the graphics and sound are pretty much up to scratch. Could this mean 4,500 worlds that are even more difficult than the original 500? You will have to wait and see. *Pac-Mania* is the second and features the original cute hero. Love him or loathe him he's back in four 3-D isometric worlds. There's a host of new features including secret bonus levels, a bouncing Pac-Man and some new ghosts that could make life very difficult for our erstwhile tennis-ball. Expect to see these sometime in the spring of '91.



Pac-Mania Lives! Good old Tecmagik have given the pill popper new life on the Master System.

A GG in the hand is worth two in the stable.

nect, making it the biggest number so far of any of the handhelds.

Software support is not going to be a problem. With the might of Sega behind it, there are going to be loads of third party developments as well as Sega's own old and new favourites.

On to the software. First up is *Columns* the *Tetris*-like game that is reviewed on page 32 of this issue. It has the same features of the Master System version, and despite my initial reservations about the size of the screen making it difficult to see the symbols as they fall, the high definition of the LCD means I needn't have worried.

The two-player head-to-head that was so popular in the RAZE offices is played using the multiplayer link. All the tunes are there to help oil the wheels of the mind, and it includes some very beautiful backgrounds. A good start for the machine.

Next is *Pengo*, described by Shintaro as a "classic" Sega game. Basically you control a penguin who has to push around ice blocks so he can squash the Sno-bees before they get mad and come to eat him. Points are awarded for every Sno-bee you squash and you get bonuses if you squash more than one at once. You also get a bonus if you complete the screens under a certain time. Cute graphics and surprisingly good gameplay.

Last but not least is the ubiquitous *Super Monaco GP*. The Formula One World Championship racing game that received 91% on the Mega Drive in issue one of RAZE deserves as much on the Game Gear. It plays just as fast, if not quicker, than the original versions and is as difficult to do master. The sound is not quite as impressive as it might be but yet again the size of the screen does not prove a hindrance.

PHANTASY STAR II

SEGA ■ RPG

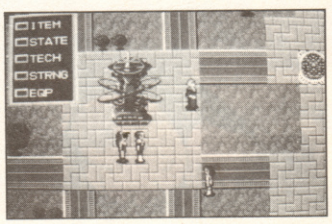
Interesting little number this. To be honest I'm not entirely sure what is going on. Still, I'll give it my best shot.

You've been having dreams about a little girl getting attacked by a monster, which is odd because you live in a world where the environment is controlled by a Mother Brain, ensuring peace and harmony. Why should you worry about such strange dreams?

Then your employers tell you to go on a mission to sort out the Bio-monsters that are terrorising the outside world. It appears they were created by the tech-labs and it is up to you to go there and find out what the hell is going on. To assist you, a half breed of the Bio-monsters and a human, a female who you took under your caring wing because she was a social outcast, comes along. You are like brother and sister. Also you have 200 Meseta to spend on provisions, weapons and the like.

What ensues is one of those window-oriented interactive adventures that are exceedingly rare on the Mega Drive. You move your character about the town, walking into shops and data libraries and so on and occasionally talking with the inhabitants. If you wander outside the city, the game changes scale so that you don't spend six hours of game time walking to the next city.

Occasionally you will bump into Biomonsters as you wonder around the wilderness. Here you will be given the option to run or fight. From then on fighting is very much out of your hands as the Mega Drive sorts things out in D&D dice-rolling fashion. Not my type of game, but wait for next issue because RPG fan Paul Rigby will be giving it the full treatment. Personally, if Santa had brought me this I would have taken the Tooth Fairy hostage until he took it back.



Not one the best RPGs for your Mega Drive, but at the moment you haven't got much of a choice.

SUPER MONACO GP

MEGA DRIVE

This code will place you three races from the end of the second season of the World Championships. If you can't win from there you are more of a donkey than Gaz of Suffolk.

0FC6 E1J0 1BO7 F000
0015 B1D5 3627 BFC0
0089 EG00 0183 0002
0000 0000 D200 28DF

This code comes from Gavin in Surrey and will give you 96 points, enough to retain the world title.

0009 MBEI Q100 0000
0450 H1OF BD34 2567
CA89 EGB1 0000 0002
0000 0000 D200 1A3B

POPULOUS

MEGA DRIVE

Gavin's back for *Populous* and has been playing the game for hours to get 494 of the 500 level codes.

LEVEL	CODE	LEVEL	CODE
25	QAZITORY	50	HOBOZJOB
75	NIMLOPILL	100	CALEOLD
125	FUTDIMAR	150	BINQUEME
175	ALPAPAL	200	EOAMPMET
225	HURTOGODOR	250	VERYOXT
275	BUGINOND	300	BILQAZOUT
325	SCODEING	350	SUZDIEHOLE
375	SADOUTER	400	BADMEILL
425	BURIKEPIL	450	JOSYMAR
475	MINCEME	494	WEAVUSPERT

RAMBO III

MEGA DRIVE

More tips from old Gav in Surrey – cheers mate! When you reach the garages at the end of mission five, stand at the top left facing right and keep firing till the end of the level is achieved. On the 3-D section of level six, shoot the helicopter so that it falls on the tank, cunning eh!

An MD in the hand is worth two in the surgery.

NARLY NINTENDO

Christmas is a time for giving – and Nintendo are giving us more than we can handle this year. The Game Boy's gobbling away at the turkey, the NES is nibbling the Yule Log and the Super Famicon's playing charades – what a jolly Christmas it is for Nintendo owners

Well, I trust everyone's checked out the Super Famicon review this issue. If not then turn to page 80 right now! See you in a few moments.

● If you're feeling bored and don't know what to do, pop down to your local video store and rent The Wizard (PG). It's a great little video that's absolutely packed with Nintendo hardware. The film tells the tale of Corey, played by Fred Savage of The Wonder Years, who joins his half-brother Jimmy on a trip to California. While on the road, Jimmy displays an uncanny knack for playing and thrashing every single video machine along the way.

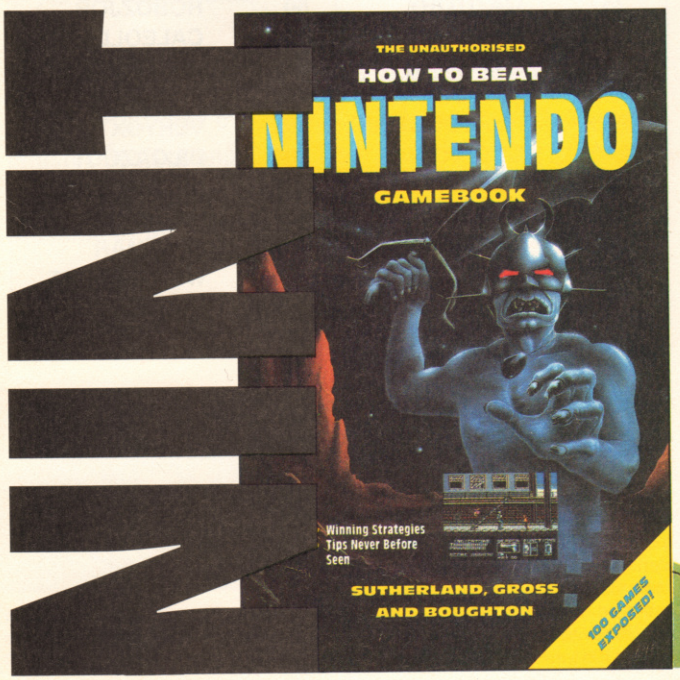
Obviously, a skill like this must be put to good use so Jimmy enters the Video Games Championship (run by Nintendo) at Disneyland. Meanwhile, Corey's brother (Christian Slater) and father (Beau Bridges) get addicted to their NES while chasing after the boys.

It's a touching film, featuring stuff like the Power Glove, *Super Mario Bros II* and *Double Dragon* to name a few. Worth seeing just for the scene where Beau Bridges tackles NES *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*!

● After last month's news that people are starting to challenge Nintendo's restrictive marketing policy, I have details of another great import. Unitec, who converted the American *Super Sprint* cart among many others, are hoping to having a UK version of *Rolling Thunder* in time for Christmas. Unitec also have many other titles up their sleeves, but have so many to choose from they don't know which to convert next. Contact them at *8 James Street, Helensburgh G84 8AS* (tel: 0436 79123) and give them your suggestions.

● Everyone knows that apart from playing games, most computers are damn boring things. After reading about the Sega Tera – which runs Mega Drive and PC software on one machine – in this month's Big in Japan, you'll be glad to hear that boring old PC owners will be able to play Nintendo games too. The new machine, developed in the States, comprises a bog-standard PC and a NES. The PC would have to be VGA with a decent soundboard so in all it looks like quite an attractive machine. I'll try to get some pictures for next month.

● Get ready for Nintendomania! The strange phenomenon that has already swept through the 50 states of America is now ready to encompass Britain in its mighty arms. The merchandising mad men at Bandai, Nintendo's dis-



A rather misleading title, but a good reference guide for just £3.99/

NES TOP TEN (UK)

1. Batman
2. Zelda II
3. Cobra Triangle
4. Super Mario Bros 2
5. Fester's Quest
6. Skate or Die
7. Mega Man
8. Kung Fu
9. Excitebike
10. Super Mario Bros

Containing some great animation, Game Boy *Dragon's Lair* was programmed right here in the UK.

AN EXCELLENT MOTIVE

Narly Nintendo software is being created right here in Britain. West Midlands company Motivetime are busy at work on a whole host of super games for both the NES and Game Boy.

Dragon's Lair is the big game of the month with Motivetime doing versions for both Nintendo machines. The Game Boy version, subtitled *The Legend*, is completely different from any other version you will have seen. It's basically an arcade adventure with Dirk trekking over all types of terrain encountering untold dangers. The animation is superb and as these exclusive screen pictures show, the graphics are some of the best on the Game Boy.

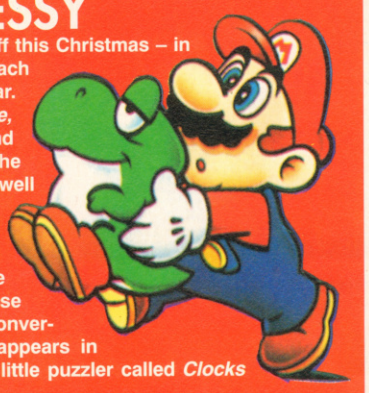
Meanwhile, the NES version contains many of the elements of the original arcade game, including the terrific animation. The few screens that I have seen are packed with colour and detail. It looks like being a great Nessy game and both products should be available in Europe for next spring.

Motivetime are also working on the follow-up, *Space Ace*, for release later next year.

Some great animation and some super colour on the Nessy version of Dragon's Lair.

NIBBLING NESSY

There's loads of great NES stuff this Christmas – in Japan. Expect this lot to reach Britain some time next year. There's the RPGs *Times Of Lore, Hillsfar, The Bard's Tale* and *Heroes of the Lance*. On the action front *Ninja Turtles 2* is well into development, while *A Boy and his Blob* (which was finished over a year ago) has just been launched. Puzzle lovers have two games to choose from this month as the NES conversion of Game Boy *Dr Mario* appears in glorious colour and a strange little puzzler called *Clocks* joins the tough 'n' tricky team.



tributors in the UK, are already planning their Christmas onslaught. No, not this Christmas – next Christmas, 1991! Mario is leading their attack on Britain with T-shirts, watches even duvet covers, so be on your guard for cute little Nintendo sales girls thrusting their wares upon you in Dixons!

Apparently, American troops in the Gulf are requesting Game Boys for Christmas presents.

● No doubt joining the Nintendo onslaught will be numerous playing guide books. First off the shelf and into my hands is *The Unauthorised How To Beat Nintendo Gamebook* (doesn't really roll of the tongue). Produced by a couple of Nintendo freaks and computer journo Paul Boughton, it claims to "solve the mysteries of over 100 games". Although the idea is very attractive, in practise all the book contains is 100 game reviews, with a few hints. This could no way be described as a hints 'n' tips book therefore the title is somewhat misleading. However, if you haven't really investigated the Nintendo software market, and aren't really sure what software masterpieces lie out there, this could be just the book for you. For a Nintendo reference guide, it's good value at £3.99. For further information contact the publishers Boxtree at *36 Tavistock Street, London WC2E 7PB*. Tel: (071) 3794666.

● Nessy owners who keep an eye on what's going on in America will already know all about the Power Glove. The Glove is a very futuristic and attractive little gauntlet that the user places over their hand and uses instead of the normal controller. By moving the glove left and right etc, you can move about the game in a pseudo-cyberspace environment. The Power Glove has just been given a massive push in Japan which makes me suspect the trendy controller could be coming out in the UK in 1991.

GAME BOY TOP TEN (JAPAN)

1. Tetris
2. Super Mario Land
3. Sa.Ga
4. SD Gundam
5. Golf
6. Dr Mario
7. Legend of Dracula
8. Nemesis
9. Qix
10. Red Arima: Ghosts 'n' Goblins

STAR STATUS

As everyone knows, the NES and Game Boy are gracing the homes and palms of many a famous person. This month we feature Tom Cruise, an addicted NES owner. Tom's fave games include *Top Gun* and *Days of Thunder*.

KID ICARUS
NES

If you type in ICARUS FIGHTS and MEDUSA ANGELS on the password screen you will get extra everthing. Also, when you go into a shop, press A and B simultaneously on the joypad in joystick 2 to get the stuff at much lower prices. Thanks to Adam Walsh in the Isle of Wight for that little beauty.

TOP GUN
NES

Dodgy tip of the month goes to Rax D Patel of Bolton who came up with this corker.
Disconnect both controllers, switch machine on, plug in controller one, press start, select player one and press start again. "Level select one" will now appear and you will be able to move to any level you want by pressing select.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
GAME BOY

When one turtle's energy is running a bit low, pause the game and press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B and A which will replenish your energy. Alan Sprately adds to the pile of Turtle tips I've received.

MEGA MAN 2
NES

Try these passwords: A1, C4, D1, D3, D5, E1, E2, E3, E4. Each letter and number refers to a row or column in the grid which makes up the password system, so play around a little.

TETRIS
GAME BOY

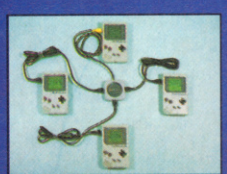
If you've just got your Game Boy and are having a bit of trouble getting a mega high score on *Tetris*, choose game A and start on level nine. The game will now increase speed after 100 levels instead of the normal ten. It's a tough tip but it'll give you mega points.

WRITE ON!

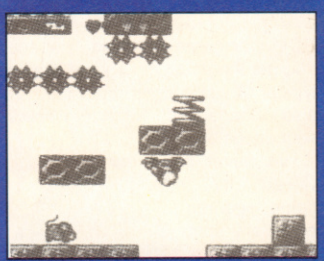
Got a tip? Got a news snippet? Got a problem? Get writing now to Narly Nintendo , RAZE, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wilts. BA14 8LH.

GOBBLING GAME BOY

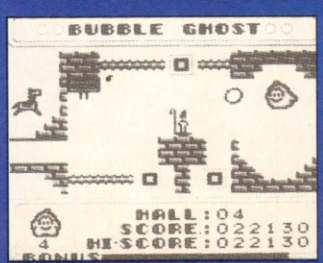
Game Boy is gobbling up games this Christmas quicker than I can gobble up turkey. Sunsoft's *Gremlins 2* is now finished and looks mightily different from the computer versions – but is still just as good.



The four-player adapter is hopefully coming to the Game Boy near year.



Gremlins 2 is ready to invade the Game Boy.



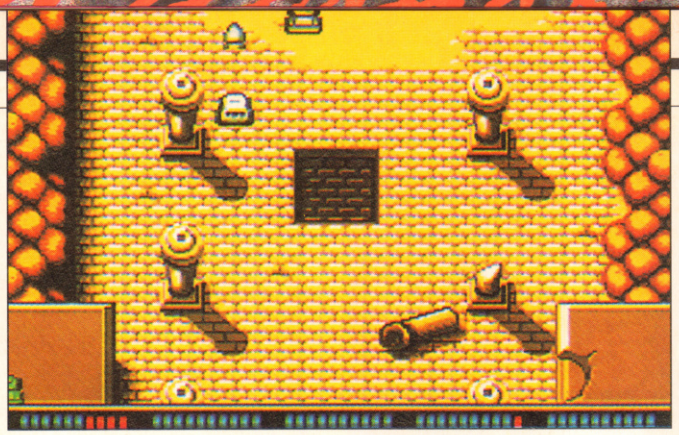
All the same layouts as the original Bubble Ghost.

Meanwhile, the first four-player Game Boy product is released in Japan this Christmas with the unveiling of *F-1 Race*. Although the game looks nothing special, it is immensely playable with Nintendo's own four-player adapter. Nintendo hope to bring this bit of hardware over in the middle of next year.

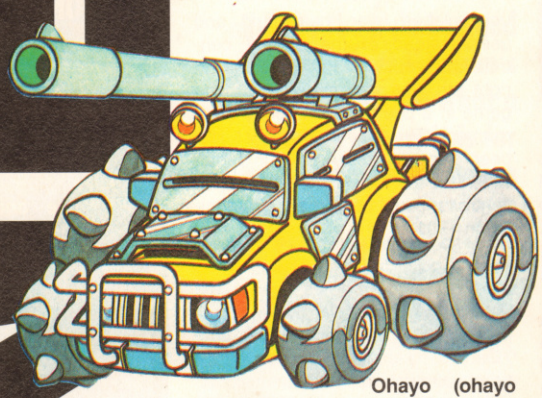
***Bubble Ghost*, that cute old Infogrames game, gets converted to the Game Boy and looks just as fun on the mono screen. All the screen layouts are the same so it shouldn't take long for previous players to get back into the game.**

Also on the horizon for Game Boy are *Ghostbusters 2* and a neat little *Card & Puzzle Collection* that should be just the thing for those long winter nights. Remember, you're never alone with a Game Boy.

NEC KNACKS



Up to five players can participate in the fabulously addictive *Moto Roader 2.*



by Shintaro Kanaoya

Irasshaimase, teenage mutant dudes. Glad you could make it again. If it's the juiciest snippets, the hottest gossip, the steamiest scandals you want, stop off here. The only section 100% dedicated to the PC Engine and its many offspring.

If there's anything you want to know about the Engine or you've got a tip for a game, get scribbling. The address is NEC Knacks, RAZE, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8LH. Until next month, domo arigato and oyasumi nasai.

Ohayo (ohayo gozaimasu if you want to be polite about it), konnichi wa or even konban wa depending on the time of day you read this, and welcome to the second (pain in the) NEC column. First, I must warn you about the hand-held PC Engine and its near-simultaneous launch in both Japan and the States.

Unfortunately other so-called informed journals in this country have got it completely wrong. Everyone has reported on the launch of the TurboExpress in America. Who cares! Grey importers aren't going to touch the American version of the hand-held machine. Why? Obvious really, any PC Engine and software you possess will have come from Japan or Hong Kong. Have you ever hear of the TurboGrafx-16 (the US version of the PC Engine) on sale in the UK? Exactly! And why do you think this is so? Because American and Japanese machines/software aren't compatible. The PC Engine was available in Japan first. Around 90% of all PC Engine software originates in Japan and gets released there first.

Do the right thing; if offered a TurboExpress look the other way. The GT, on the other hand, is the one to pocket.

And now on with the show.

SEQUELS AND PREQUELS

Looking though the releases this month, I find *Peach Boy Legend II, Ys III: Wanderers From Ys, Shubibiman 2* and *Moto Roader 2.* Yes, sequels! There's nothing wrong with them as such. If as much effort is put into them as the first, and you're interested in the continuing adventures of a peach, then I guess you'll be happy. But are you really happy with sequels – don't you fancy something new and original? No! Okay, then.

Now for something fast and throttly. Something that shudders with power when you enter it. Something where you can squeeze its stick, wrench it up and down, and really step on its clutch. No, it's not Suzy Uki, but a sequel you musn't miss: *Moto Roader 2*. The original, *Moto Roader* (honest), is one of the most addictive racing games ever. It's an overhead simultaneous five-player racing game. A superb party piece. You race, win money, buy parts for your car, punch one of your fellow racers in the head when he gets too good...

As for the sequel, well it's a stonker. Or, as we say in Japan, jozu. There are seven courses, deadly cars, flying cars, tanks, speed-ups, weapons and so much more. Get it!

QUITE GOOD, PROBABLY

A contender for best game of the year has got to be *Bastille*. The CD-ROM war game is based in space. You get the usual hexagonal display typical of war games, but there are also loads of arcade action sequences.

I've never been convinced by mixing game genres – especially something like a war game and arcade action game. The results can be, and usually are, disastrous. Take *Car Wars* – it tried to mix action and RPG and fell flat.

Bastille looks astounding, let's hope the programming team make it into a great player.

TIPS

DIE HARD

On the title screen hold down button I and press Run. You'll get infinite continues for your trouble. To kill Tony, the boss of level 4, get into position and batter him when his knife is drawn. Forget attacking him when he's laughing.

F-1 CIRCUS

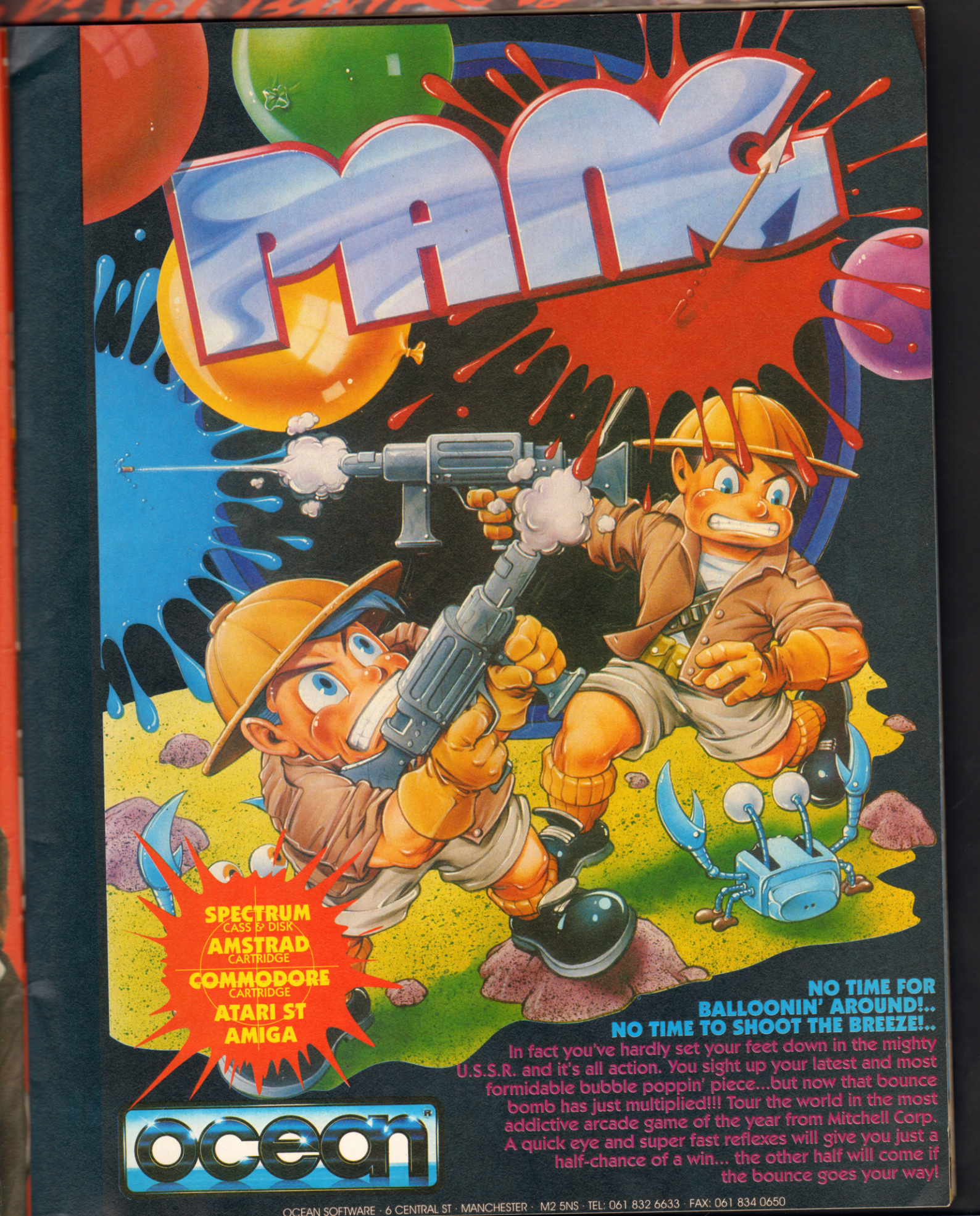
Free extended play with Suzy Uki for anyone who knows how to select any of the 12 teams in the competition. Great, you don't know! That leaves me. Select game mode. When the course screen appears, hold down button II and then button I until the team selection bit arrives. Then race off to where you want to go.

KLAX

From the options screen, hold down button II, up, Select and Run simultaneously to flip through all the game screens. Repeat this procedure twice to get to the music screen.

LEGENDARY AXE II

According to Les (issue 2), this game looks like *Rastan Saga II.* Hardly surprising as *Rastan Saga II* screen shots were used in the review! Still, a tip to increase the level skip by two. When collecting the jewel that increases your level by one, wait until time reaches zero and then grab the stone. Go up two levels mighty warrior.


BAM!
SPECTRUM
CASS & DISK
AMSTRAD
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COMMODORE
CARTRIDGE
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ATARI ATTACK

by Richard Monteiro

You'll only make yourself sick by missing out on the fabulous news, previews, gossip, reviews, and tips for your Atari console. Make yourself well again; tune in to the only column dedicated to the Lynx and 7800.

There's no stopping the Atari rumour mill. Last month the new Lynx, this month the new Panther console.

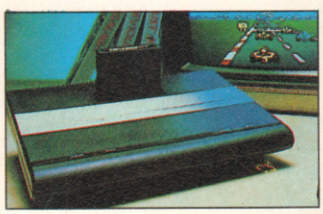
Regardless of how well the 2600 and 7800 consoles have done to date, there's no escaping the fact that they're old hat technologically. Almost all consoles currently available beat the 2600/7800 with a joypad tied behind their monitor socket. Take the Lynx, for instance, it's streets ahead with its large 4096-colour palette and fabulous four-channel custom sound chip.

The only way Atari can keep ahead in the console war is by releasing something superior to the Mega Drive and Super Famicom, fast. And that's exactly what Atari plan to do.

Exact technical details of Atari's forthcoming console – codenamed Panther – are sketchy. However, a spokesman for Atari offered: "the new machine is more advanced than anything in its category." It is most likely Atari will stick with a 68000 processor – the same chip that drives the ST, Amiga and Mega Drive. The chip is cheap, fast, popular with programmers, and more than adequate for a console which relies on custom video and audio hardware for most of the real work.

Although the same processor as the ST will be used in Panther, there is little chance the new console will be ST compatible. For a start the ST is far too under-powered compared to the cream of current consoles. Second, Atari want existing ST owners to pick up the Panther. Finally, look at the bodge Commodore have made with the C64GS console: why buy a GS when a standard C64 will do more and cost less?

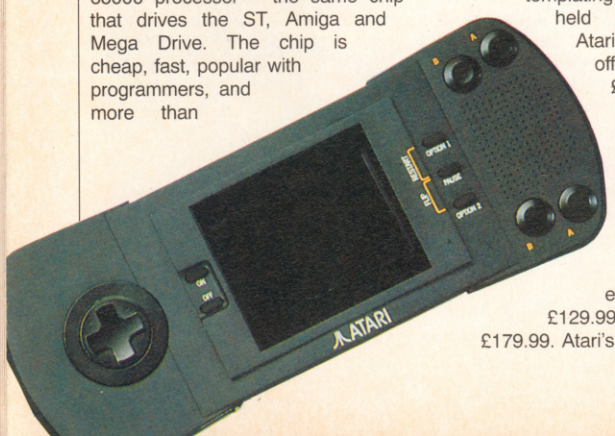
Sources have hinted at the possibility of 24-bit (true) colour and 16-bit sound. A price of around £140 has also been proposed. Quite how Atari will manage to release such a spectacular console for less than a Mega Drive remains a mystery. The Panther is likely to be shown behind closed doors at the US CES in January... stay tuned!



Atari's 7800 console looks set to be superseded at last by a performance-busting machine by the middle of this year. Watch out for more information on Panther over the next few months.

Lynx loses lbs

Astounding news for anyone contemplating getting a hand-held Lynx console; Atari have shaved off an incredible £50. That's right, by the time you read this you'll be able to pick up an Atari colour portable powerhouse for £129.99 rather than £179.99. Atari's move will have interesting repercussions as far as the Sega Game Gear goes. Last issue, Virgin, distributors of Sega stuff in the UK, reckoned on selling the Game Gear for between £120 and £140. The latter of the two prices certainly seemed the more likely. In view of the current situation though, some serious rethinking is necessary on Virgin's part. Well done, Atari.



Bit on the side

Apparently, 2-Bit System's Atari ST audio sampler *Replay 4* was used to produce the incredible sampled sound effects used in *Klax* and *Road Blasters*. The chap responsible for the great music, Lx Rudis, grabbed the sound on an ST using *Replay*. The programmer, Greg Omi, then wrote a utility to convert the sound to Amiga IFF sound sample format and ported the file to the Lynx. It sounds like a very complex way of doing things, but then the Lynx development system does comprise an Amiga 2000.

Tongue tumblers

Rolling off Atari's production line (if not its tongue) are the three smash titles *Rampage, Robo Squash*, and *Rygar*. All should be in the shops as you read this priced £29.99.

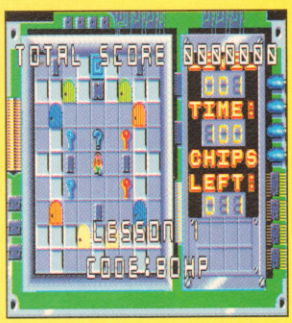
Atari Corp have gained the rights to produce computer and console versions of the Atari Games coin-op, *Pit Fighter*. You could be seeing a Lynx version of this brutal beat-'em-up later in the year. Judging by the arcade game's revolutionary digitised graphics, this could be one of Atari's hottest releases this year.

Lynx

You aren't going to believe this, but this fantastic brain teaser actually features five secret levels – as if 144 aren't enough! Because each of these levels are so tough to complete and require a good deal of explanation, the whole of this month's tips column will be devoted to the game.

Level: Unknown (probably 145)
Code: MAND
Title: Mandelbrot
Strictly speaking this isn't a level at all, but a phenomenal demo showing off the Lynx's capabilities. There isn't a task to complete. Instead you get to play on the first ever portable Mandelbrot (and Julia set) fractal graphics generator. Incredible! The controls go like this:
THUMB PAD – movement of zoom window
BUTTON A – zoom in
BUTTON B – zoom out
OPTION 1 – stop/start generation
PAUSE – parameter menu. In this menu Option 1 toggles between Mandelbrot and Julia explorer. Pressing Option 1 starts the action once more.
OPTION 2 – during calculations this toggles between three modes: stop generation, colour cycling animation, reverse colour cycling.

LEVEL	CODE	TITLE
145	MAND	Mandelbrot
146	JHEN	Cake Walk
147	COZA	Force Field
148	RGSK	Mind Block
149	DIGW	Special



CALLING ALL ATARIPHILES

This is your corner. It will only survive with your help. So, if you've some hot tip on getting the best out of a game for any Atari console – or wish to know the what, where, why, and when of a game or other Atari console-related question – send your scribblings to Atari Attack, RAZE, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LH. The best game-busting ploy printed each month will win the author a software title of his choice.

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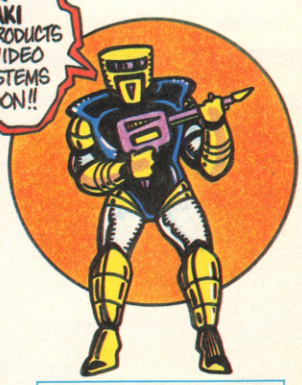

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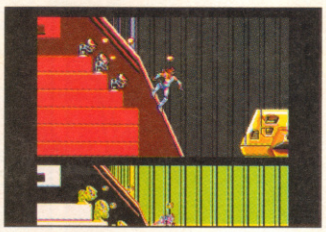
COMMODORE CORRAL

by Les Ellis

Commodore advertising is everywhere this Christmas. Little does the unsuspecting punter realise that he could have got a computer version of the C64GS five years ago

It's great to see the old C64 being given a new injection of life with Commodore C64GS console. It seems that all the major manufacturers are realising this great opportunity and releasing overly-expensive carts containing games that have already been out for the C64 at a fraction of the price. To be fair, most manufacturers are setting their price point at £19.99, which is an acceptable price for console carts.

● System 3 seem to be supporting just about every console. And you can bet they'll get a warm welcome on the C64GS, a console who's insides they're all too familiar with. Their ever-impressive *Ninja* series makes it to the GS this month with *Ninja Remix*. It will be joined by *Myth* and *Vendetta*, games that have already proved so successful in C64 cassette form. In early 1991 you'll be able to get *Last Ninja III*, with *IK Deluxe* following shortly after.

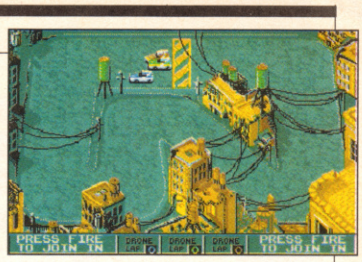


Loads of blasting action in the original *Strider*, the latest "possible" from US Gold. (Amiga pic.)

■ US Gold have at last made a definite decision on their releases for the C64GS. They have decided that the superb*Games* series will definitely *not* be converted. Last month they were quite hopeful for a conversion, but they seem to change their minds with their socks so there's still a chance for the Epyx anthologies.

■ Other games that "may or may not" be coming out for the C64GS from US Gold include *Ghouls 'n" Ghosts, Striders I* and *II* and *UN Squadron*. But, as I said, no-one at US Gold seems to know what's going on from one day to the next. Don't hold your breath.

■ From Domark I have at last got some solid news. I've actually got the following carts in my hands! *Cyberball* is a futuristic one- or two-player game loosely based on American football; *Badlands* is a Tengen coin-op conversion similar to *Super Sprint*; and Vindicators is another one- or two-player game set in the future. The first two are brand-new games, while *Vindicators* has already proved successful on other computers (including the C64). The whole range of Domark games are just £19.99 each – what a bargain!



Super Sprint action in the future with *Badlands* from Domark. (Amiga pic.)

CALLING ALL C64GS OWNERS!

There's a Commodore cart available for the sender of the best C64GS tip every month. Send your tips to *Commodore Corral, RAZE, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LH.*

AMSTRADOPOLIS

by David Goliath

The TV adverts are now hitting home and sales of the Amstrad GX4000 look set to soar this Christmas. The software companies are now feeling the "Amstrad effect" and producing software by the bundle to support it

Whatever your taste in games, the GX4000 will have something just right for you over the next few months.

■ System 3 have never been renowned for producing loads of titles each year, but the GX4000 is soon to be graced by the presence of hits like *Ninja Remix, Myth* and *Vendetta*. In January you'll be able to get hold of *Last Ninja 3*, which is to be followed in March by *IK Deluxe*. What a privilege it is to have such masters of the microchip deigning to appear on our humble machine – indeed, we are blessed.

■ US Gold are continuing their support for the Amstrad with the release of Epyx's *World of Sport* (reviewed below). They are following up *World of Sport* with the super Sega game *Strider II*. No-one knows when it's coming out, but you can be sure it'll be a cracker.

■ News from the Domark stable indicates they have a strong interest in the GX4000 – and why not? Titles they are currently considering for the GX include include *Klax* (yeah!), *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *Badlands*, *Vindicators* and *Cyberball*. None are definitely planned for the GX, but I'll put my money on *Klax* and the Bond title for sure.

AMSTRADIC ACTIVITY

Don't forget, I'm always on the look out for any cheats on the new Amstrad games. (Incidentally, old type-in cheats won't work as the machine hasn't got a keyboard – dopes!) Get your letters into *Amstradopolis, RAZE, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LH.* Until next month, I bid you adieu.

Weeee... Only a maniac would dive from this height.

WORLD OF SPORT

US GOLD/EPYX ■ SPORTS ANTHOLOGY

This is basically a collection of some of the best events from the classic *Games* series. The four events on the cartridge are: slalom skiing, BMX stunt riding, high diving and surfing. According to US Gold they couldn't fit anymore on the cart, but I have my doubts.

You can practise or compete in any or all of the events. The graphics are quite attractive but the sound is weak, even for an 8-bit machine. With only four events, a selling price of £24.99 is a bit much. Even when considered against the slower loading of the Amstrad disk versions of any of the *Games* series, you're still paying an extra tenner just for the privilege of a cartridge version.

It's a shame *World of Sport* has no playability, as a revamped *Games* cart would have been just the job if properly implemented at a sensible price.

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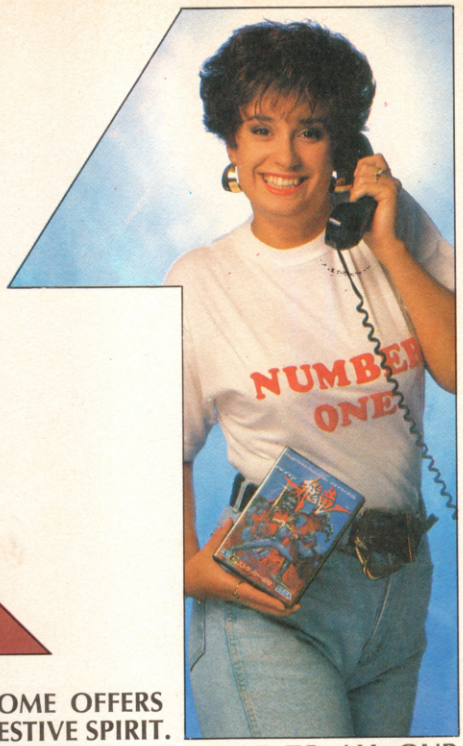

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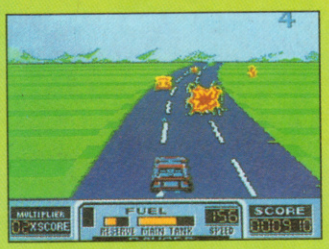
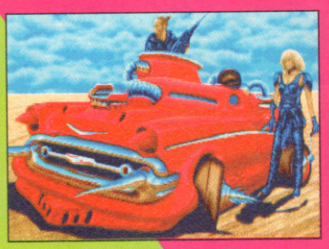
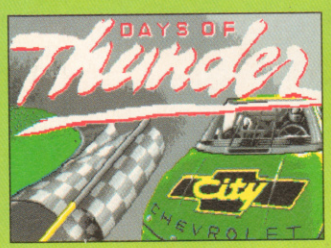




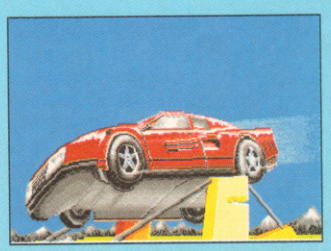
FASTER!

Burn rubber and kick asphalt in Days of Thunder and Toyota Celica GT Rally.



FASTEST!

Trash tarmac in 4-D Sports Driving, Crash Course and Hard Drivin' 2.



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XENOPHOBE

ATARI ■ EXPLORATION SHOOT-'EM-UP

Les Ellis knows all about a fear of strangers and foreigners. But our xenophobic friend found himself quite at home with these alien bugs

Xenophobia is a fear of strangers, foreigners and more specifically aliens. A xenophobe is someone who has a hatred for such things and all the consequences that come with them. For instance, erstwhile prime minister Margaret Thatcher could be described as xenophobic when it comes to Europeans, conversely old John Major says he is not a xenophobe. But we're not talking about those sorts of foreigners here, we're talking about aliens, big, slimy, green and red ones.

The aliens were thought dead, but after a garbled message from the planet engineers on a far off planet indicating they were in some sort of trouble, it seems the aliens, or xenos, have resurfaced and are up to their old tricks again.

Of course, the problem could just be that the planet is running a bit short on air, so a group of space mechanics are despatched to the planet. While the engineers are on their way a lone escape pod reaches Earth containing just one person – the only survivor from the planet. The shaken man had a terrifying tale to tell. He spoke of untold monstrosities, incredible creatures, mass murders... A radio message was sent to the engineers' ship, they should strap on their armour, tog up with weapons and be prepared for some action.

When the Earthship arrived at the planet, the engineers saw what the problem was. The planet had been invaded and overrun by the dreaded xenos. Luckily, the erstwhile inhabitants had spotted them and created a series of 23 complex space stations, each with its own environment, in an attempt to outrun the spreading aliens. But the xenos soon got wise and adapted their cell structure to the different environments of each planet. Quickly they started breeding and the trouble continued.

Of course, the humans were even cleverer than the dopey bugs, and each station was equipped with a self-destruct mechanism. If it came to the worst, the inhabitants could nuke the whole planet, hopefully stopping the xenos in their path.

A force of the four toughest engineers is sent down onto each of the space stations in the hope of either killing all the alien lifeforms, or, in desperation, setting the self-destruct mechanism, leaving the planet and turning it into space debris.

Up to four Lynx players can play the game simultaneously, choos-

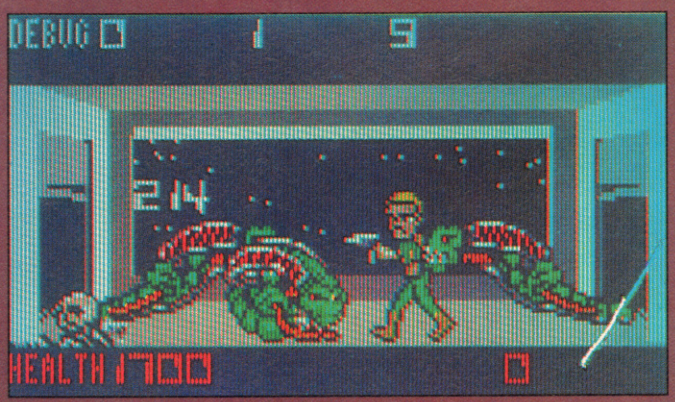
ALIEN RESCUES

★ If you have any trouble with a Festor alien, get a jetpack and hover above his gaze.

★ Bombs are effective and should be used often, but beware you don't blow up one of your fellow hunters!

★ If you're playing a multi-player game, don't walk around like sheep, split up the area and cover different bits.

★ If things are getting particularly dire, set off the self-destruct mechanism. It will blow up the planet, but you'll save yourself.



Some of the best graphics on the Lynx.

POD

(25 points) A hideous green spore that will hatch into a critter if not destroyed in time. Pods cannot attack – until they hatch.

ROLLERBABY

(100 points) A thick-skinned cross between a large turtle and an armadillo. Rolls into a ball then bowls over its victim.

FESTOR

(200 points) A huge, menacing, reptilian creature that waits in the doorways and attacks without warning. A Festor can paralyse its victim with its telekenetic gaze. It can also lay ball-like eggs which can knock down a hunter. The egg will eventually turn into a pod if not destroyed in time.

TENTACLE

(100 points) A long-reaching appendage of a horrifying creature hiding beneath the floors and above the ceilings. Wraps around the victim's head or arms and traps its prey.

SNOTTERPILLAR

(150 points) A very large, leaping, heavily-armoured creature, similar to a lizard and a caterpillar. Attacks either by jumping against its victim or by spitting slimy phlegm.

CRITTER

(75 points) A cross between a small, three-legged squid and a scorpion. Critters latch onto their luckless victims and suck away their skin.

Do you think the word over the page is large? Kashikomarimashita.

ALIENS NEWS

Aliens III is still going ahead. Latest news indicates that Sigourney Weaver reprises her role as Ripley but another director has had the chop. The last director, Vincent Ward, came up with the idea of the aliens' ship crash-landing into a lake on the top of a floating space monastery. Ward's idea will stay but the directorial control will go over to David Fincher, previously responsible for numerous Madonna videos including Vogue.

ing to be either one of the heroes or the Snotterpillar, a gross bit of vegetation that walks about spitting at the good guys. The chance to play either a good or bad guy makes *Xenophobe* unique. While the one player game is a delight to not only play but also to look at, the multi-player games turn into mass battles.

If you haven't got this for the Lynx, you haven't lived.

GRAPHICS **94%**
✓ The best yet on the Lynx, the aliens are absolutely gross.
✓ There are a wide range characters and some super backgrounds over the numerous space stations.

SOUND **84%**
✓ Great blasting sounds and general mayhem noises as the action hots up.
✓ Eerie drum track and between-level music.

PLAYABILITY **94%**
✓ Incredibly addictive as you battle through the 23 stations.
✓ Playing the Snotterpillar is great. Every Lynx owner should have one.

£29.99 ▼ OUT NOW

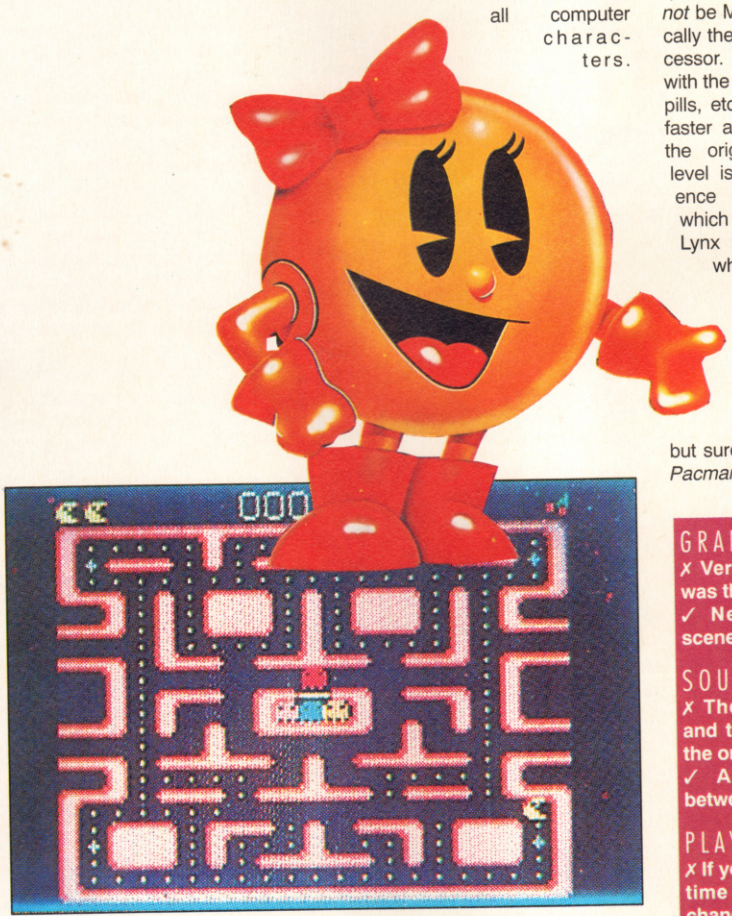
LYNX 94%

MS. PAC-MAN

ATARI ■ ARCADE MAZE

Les Ellis gets a dose of Atari's medicine as he pops the pills and dresses up in women's clothing

When Pac-Man stomped and chomped his way into the arcades some 12 years ago, no-one would have foreseen his success nor the series of games that was to spawn from this most lovable of all computer characters.



Chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp...

Mario may be a jolly chap and Alex Kidd a bit of a lad, but Pac-Man was the first and original cuddly computer character. It was the simplistic design (like that of the Coke bottle and Batman insignia in the last decade) that made his representation an icon of the Seventies.

After the huge success of *Pac-Man*, there just had to be a follow-up. But it was not till 1982 that *Ms. Pac-Man*, a Namco game, appeared in the arcades and started the furore once more.

The action of the young lady in question – who, theoretically, might *not* be Mr. Pac-Man's wife – is basically the same as that of her predecessor. The maze hasn't changed, with the two exits, bits of fruit, power pills, etc. But the ghosts are much faster and more intelligent than in the original game. The difficulty level is the only significant difference between the two games, which is not saying much for the Lynx version of *Ms. Pac-Man* when the original *Pac-Man* is over ten years old. In fact, that's the main problem with this game, there's just not enough content.

Having a portable Pacman is fantastic, but surely *Pacman '90* and not *Ms. Pacman 82*?

GRAPHICS **75%**
✗ Very simplistic, but then so was the original.
✓ Neat little between-level scenes.

SOUND **67%**
✗ There is no in-game music and the effects are as basic as the original.
✓ A jolly title tune, with between-level ditties.

PLAYABILITY **82%**
✗ If you loathed Pacman the first time round, you're unlikely to change your mind now...
✓ but if you loved the original, this one will keep you hooked.

£29.99 ▼ OUT NOW

LYNX 79%

Floccinaucinihilipilification – now that's a very big word.

OOOPS UP

DEMONWARE ■ PUZZLE SHOOT-'EM-UP

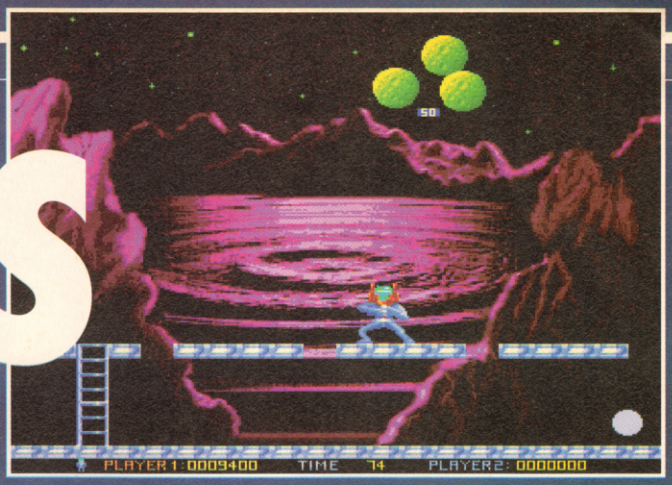
Julian Boardman invites everyone to say, "oopula"

Obviously, in certain universes, meteorites have taken on a whole new life of blatant elasticity, bouncing around and squashing spacemen wherever they may go. You wouldn't believe the lengths to which these aliens will go to stop your humble astronaut from getting home.

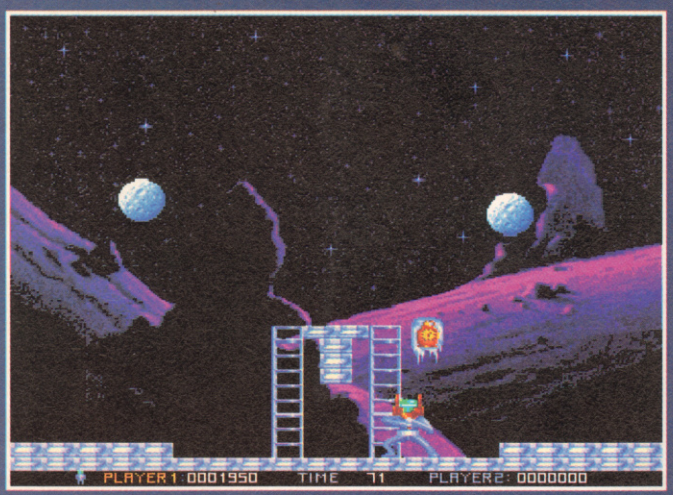
The two hapless astronauts in question have become stranded in a distant universe. The evil ruler has a few no-go territories (well, 99 to be exact but size *is* relative) he'd quite like to use again, as the population getting little large. Contraception is not that easy for the indigenous population. So in return for clearing these areas of the bouncy asteroids, which are too fast for the gastropodian inhabitants, the leader will return the spacemen's ship... bit by bit. Yep, the old bugger's split the ship into 99 little bits, and I've no idea how you're going to assemble it once you've got all the bits back.

You, and some luckless accomplice if you can drag one along, must destroy each planet's large, round, bouncing lumps of rock with vertically-pointing guns. In the manner of all true asteroids, the rocks sub-divide when hit, leaving smaller and quicker lumps to bounce around till they hit and obliterate you. While all this is going on you must collect a token which, when the level is completed, can be cashed in for a bit of your spaceship.

Ooops Up is a fast, infuriating and panic-inducing romp through a world of bouncing rocks and crawling gastropods. The title, of course, comes from the smash hit of the same name by German hipsters Snap (they of The Power and Cult of Snap fame). The background music that plays throughout the game is a short, looped sample of that song and, thankfully, can be turned off.

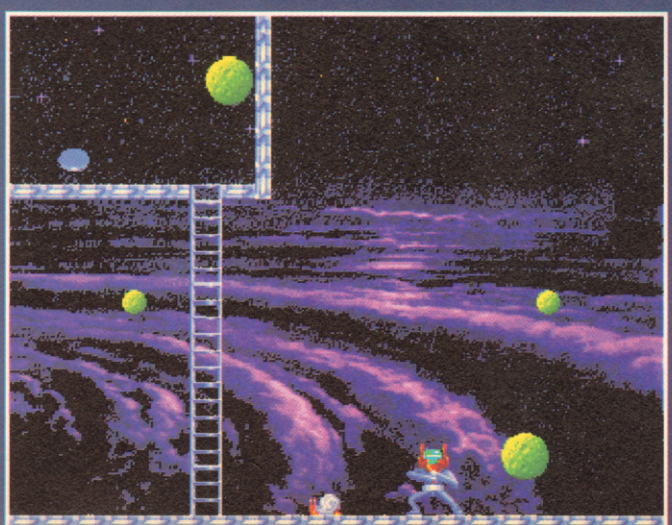


Intergalactic pawnbrokers get in on the action.



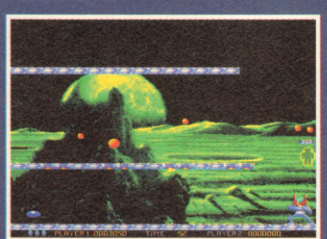
▲ Flying pizza attack as a Hawaiian Special splats home.

▼ Climb the 20 steps of the ladder to reach the



250 points and a free weapon float in mid-air awaiting your capture.

Jump up high for that extra life, but watch out for the balls above it.



GRAPHICS **82%**

✗ Foreground sprites and platforms are a tad uninspiring.

✓ Excellent digitised backdrops give it that 2001 feeling.

SOUND **83%**

✓ Millions of those "pings" and "boings".

✓ And, of course, the "amazing" Snap soundtrack.

PLAYABILITY **85%**

✗ Even the shorter levels require annoying disk access.

✓ Despite each of the screens having the same objective, it avoids becoming repetitive.

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AMIGA

85%

Gazza II

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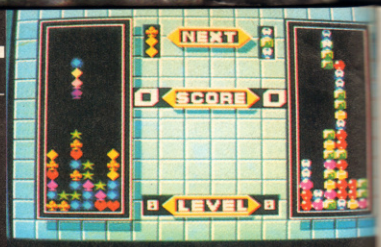


SEGA ■ ARCADE PUZZLE

Julian Boardman cut off his hair in an attempt to crack columns (what dedication)

I seem to have developed some minor personality defects since becoming the resident RAZE puzzle game expert: irritability, a nasty twitch, and that faraway stare that horror movies tend to rely on for cheap effects. But I suppose it goes with the territory. Therefore, it was with some relief that I came across my newest fix, *Columns*, to take away those post-puzzle blues.

The one-player Flash game. Here you must get the highest score within a given time, preferably clearing the board of all pieces.

The premise behind *Columns* is to create rows and columns, diagonally, horizontally or vertically in the same colour of more than three blocks in length. Lengths of three, in assorted colours, drop from the top of the six-block wide space that you have to fill. It is possible to cycle through the colours by pressing button two, the bottom colour moves to the top and the other two slide down one block, to get them in the right order for the maximum points. Once a column is complete those pieces disappear, making room for more. Should the blocks push up over the top of the playing area it's game over.

If the blocks are placed correctly, it might be possible to clear nearly half the screen with just one drop. As some disappear, those on top will drop to form more columns and so on. It is the unpredictable chain reactions that usually yield the most points and give the game an element of surprise as you come back from that seemingly hopeless situation.

There are six types of game based on this principle, three basic elements with a timed Flash version of each. Each game has nine levels of speed and three of difficulty, represented by four, five or six colours to match.

The first game is a one-player version where the object is to score as many points as possible before the screen fills up. The first of the two-player games is the same as the one-player, with each person taking turns to drop the block into place. The second two-player game, "Versus", brings in a competitive edge as each player simultaneously tries to complete more columns than the other on their own separate playfields. If one player does well then the other's play area will shrink from the bottom, forcing the existing blocks to rise nearer the game over point.

Undoubtedly, this is the best variation of the game – just like *Tetris* was more fun against each other on the coin-op version. Due to the game's nature, it is possible to be hovering right near the top of the play area, get a chain reaction and turn the game on its head in one move. Of course, with the option of playing over nine matches, skill will eventually win out in the end.

VEXED BY VERSUS?

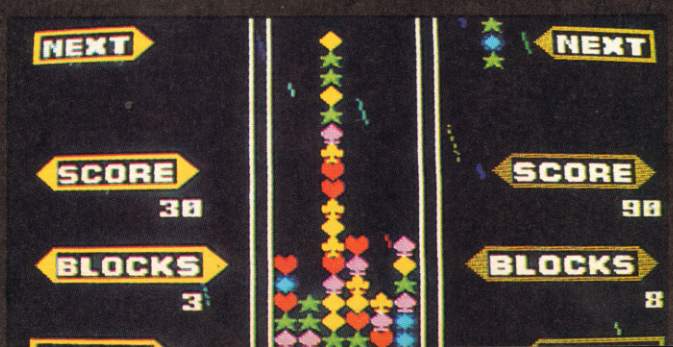
★ Try not to complete easy threes when four and fives could get extra points and mess up your opponent more.

★ Creating many rows and getting the odd diagonal will get more chain reactions because when the diagonal goes the fragmented rows will create their own diagonals.

★ Bring those blocks down as quick as possible. If you hang around for too long, they'll disappear!

★ Don't panic! You could get right to the top and get chain reaction if you stick to your gameplan.

In this version of the two-player game, each player must take turns to place the blocks.



GRAPHICS 78%

✗ Design of the normal game is very dull.

✓ Some nice moving backgrounds on the Flash variant.

SOUND 83%

✓ A mellow tune to sway along to whilst playing the game.

✓ Basic yet informative in-game effects.

PLAYABILITY 93%

✓ A minute to learn, a lifetime to master.

✓ Great competitive atmosphere on the two-player head-to-head.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

MASTER SYSTEM 90%

Guess what? *Columns* is coming out on both the Mega Drive and Sega's new hand-held, the Game Gear. The Game Gear version will be released in conjunction with the machine early next year, while the Mega Drive version, with slightly improved graphics (not that it makes much difference), is already available in Japan.

PREVIEW

AMIGA - ATARI ST - PC / PS - AMSTRAD CPC / CPC+ / GX 4000 - C 64 - SPECTRUM

DICK TRACY

THIS TIME THEY'RE OUT TO GET HIM!

RETRACE THE STEPS OF DICK TRACY, THE WORLD FAMOUS COMIC STRIP DETECTIVE, IN THIS SUPERB COMPUTER CONVERSION OF THE BLOCK BUSTER MOVIE.

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THE COMPUTER GAME

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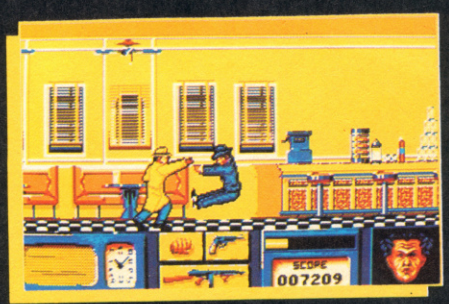


© The Walt Disney Company.

ISHIDO

ACCOLADE ■ STRATEGY BOARDGAME

Being a fairly intelligent chap (two A-levels!!), Julian Boardman was sent to follow The Way of the Stones, but said he preferred The Way of the Beatles

The Way of the Stones is an ancient game that has been played by many cultures across the world. Archaeologists have discovered the remains of the infamous 96 square board in many significant locations around the globe. Throughout the course of the Sixties these stone boards were found in Israel, in the sarcophagus of an Egyptian pharaoh, New Mexico and other British sites dating back to Celtic times. They all seemed to relate to a "Rule of Four", a philosophy that these cultures had developed at disparate times, and each version of these boards could be traced back to a seminal time in the evolution of this society and its philosophy. Fortunately for us, Accolade have released their own version, obviously in some attempt to become immortal themselves.

Ishido is a boardgame where you attempt to match stones by their colour and shape (or symbol). The game is played on a 8x12 board, including a one-square, none-scoring border known as the Beyond, the rest of the board being known as the Within. Each of the 36 unique stones has two attributes, a colour and a symbol. Only by matching one of these attributes with another is it possible to lay one of the 72 pieces, one pair of each of the 36. The pieces cannot be laid in a diagonal match, only left, right, above or below. Subsequently, there are four matches that can be made, from one to four sides, the score for each corresponding to the number of sides.

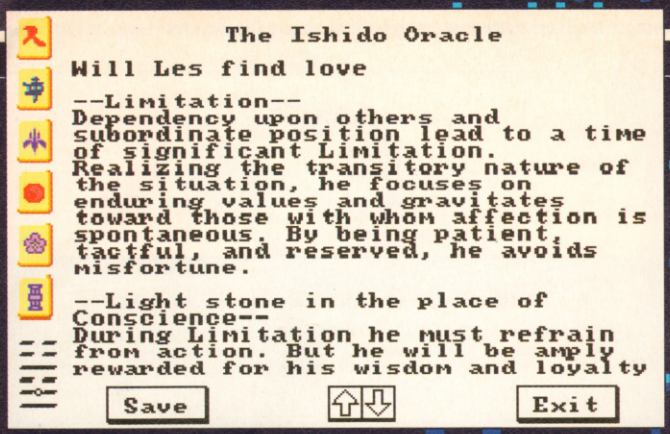
Scoring only happens in the Modern game, in the Ancient game the winner is the first to empty the pouch of stones. For a one-sided match, the colour or symbol of the pieces must match. For a two-sided match, one piece must match with colour, the other with symbol. For a three-sided match there must be one of colour, one of symbol, and one of either. For a four-sided match (known as a four-way) there must be two of each. Also, the centre stone which makes up the four-way must be placed last of all to count.

Each four-way that is completed will yield a bonus which increases the more that are placed. Also, the score for the other matches that are made increase by one for each

To attain the standard of play shown below takes an expert touch (or the computer) as each move is slanted towards four-way matches. *Ishido* can be played in four ways: solitaire, cooperative, tournament and challenge.

This set of stones, known as the Gems, is the default set from a choice of eight. The highlighted pieces denote a newly-formed four-way match.

Confucius says "Many hands make light work..."



The oracle has spoken, Les must be patient. Ah, well, he's still got his furry mammals for comfort.

four-way that is made. A few plays soon reveals the importance of creating as many four-sided matches as possible.

Once a four-way match has been completed, it becomes possible to consult the Oracle, this will reveal the answers to a question you will have asked before the match began. Answers are frequently cryptic, but it can provide a solution to any question you care to throw at it. The answers may well be drawn from a library of possible responses, but probability shows that, like horoscopes, you may come across a useful one eventually.

For each separate game the stones are drawn in a regular way, so at the end of the game it can be played again using the same order – you can either regard this as a great way to practise or an easy way to cheat.

The game options include two-player team or challenge. While the former allows a good amount of co-operation, the latter is probably the most exciting option because of its competitive nature. Either of these games can have the computer taking over the role of one or both players. There is also a tournament option which means that any number of human or computer players can compete in identical games (ie: the same opening tableau and order in which stones appear) to find an overall champion.

The program also includes a complex graphics editor which allows the player to create his own set of stones for use in the game, or load in some from another art package. Already built into the game are a selection of stones and some very attractive matching boards.

The majority of the program's controls are from pull-down menus, including the useful help section. However, if you do receive help then it is not possible to enter the high-score table. Should you make any mistakes or try to play a false move the computer will print a prompt explaining why that particular move cannot be made.

For many, this game will provide an instant appeal. It's probably best suited to a true strategist with time to explore the complex strategies, many of which are explained in the manual. Other more casual players may find that it has a more insidious, lasting appeal, which perseverance may expose.

At any time during play you can choose from one of *Ishido's* eight boards. The boards available include Gems, Inner Shapes, Magica, Chungfu, Ishido, Ramses, Runes and Shaman. Clockwise: Ramses, Chungfu, Ishido.

GRAPHICS **62%**

✓ Clear and uncluttered with large playing pieces.
✓ A wide range of colourful stones and boards to choose from.

SOUND **75%**

✗ The in-game effects could be more informative.
✓ No in-game tune to disrupt the concentration.

PLAYABILITY **77%**

✗ May take some a little too long to become successful.
✓ Easy-to-learn rules and simple stone controls.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

AMIGA

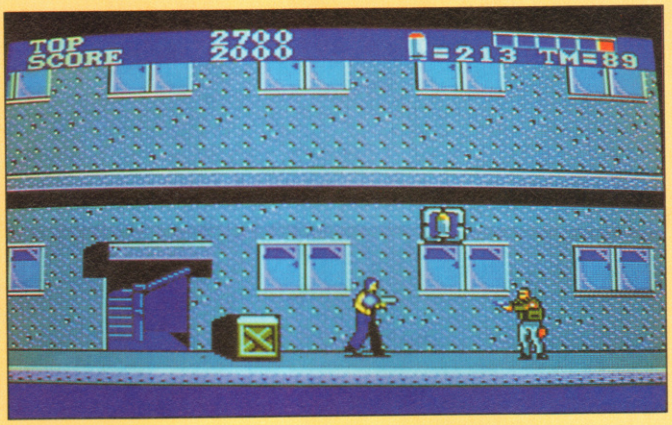
79%

...but so does pressing a switch.

E-SWAT

CITY UNDER SIEGE

Julian "Robo" Boardman wrestles with an exo-skeleton before taking to the streets of "old" New York



Mr E-SWAT (left) ponders on how the violent nature of modern art (above) can lead to violence (right).

The E-SWAT (Extra Special Weapons And Tactics) team are best described as "a bunch of lads". All dressed up in their armour, blasting seven bells out of the assembled throng of gangsters, in the true Eighties-style of mindless violence – well, it's hardly New Age or green is it? I bet they all drink lager and failed to get into the marines as well.

However, what these valiant supercops have to do is save the city of New York from six outrageously-powerful bad guys who all have their own peculiar nastiness to inflict upon the unfortunate policemen. Things are a lot easier once you have earned your armour, but this means the first stage, consisting of 50-odd gun-toting crooks and a fat git who breathes fireballs at you, must be conquered before you get that shiny blue titanium suit.

Ammunition is sadly limited, meaning that all you joypad jocks out there can't go on a button frenzy, but there is plenty of ammo to pick up so all is not lost. The thing is, getting to the ammo usually requires 20% more than you have actually got, making your death one of those deeply ironic Oliver Stone-type demises where the hero gets wasted just yards from safety and a warm bath.

There are five rounds to complete, each made up of four stages, all of which have a mid-level heavy and an end of level crook. None of them are particularly simple to eradicate, and all have a very large number of cronies to defeat before you can get near to them.

Following in the tradition of its arcade predecessor, *E-SWAT* is a very playable shoot-'em-up, with a lot of challenge even in the lower levels. There's plenty of fast action and a wide variety of end of level nasties, more than enough to keep yer average joypad junky happy.

TOUGH COOKIES

Fat Man: Wait for him to shoot a fireball then crouch down and shoot him.

Boomerang Man: Shoot him in the head when he's catching or throwing his boomerang. Aim for just above the head of the hostage.

Flame Thrower: Shoot quickly as his range is limited while he's under attack.

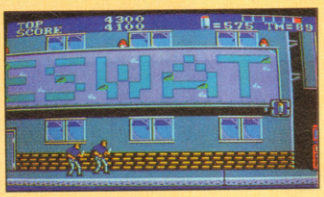
Death Machine 1: Destroy all four weapons ports. It's safest on the left side of the screen, but your bullets can't reach the machine. Probably best to shoot the top and bottom weapons first then concentrate on the centre ones.

Death Machine 2: Shoot out the lasers on the ceiling then the three weapons on the machine.

Final Boss: Destroy the four weapons ports above the last boss. Keep shooting at all times, ducking just before his bullets reach you. You must destroy his shields before he can be defeated.

The Fat Man's fire balls prove too much of a match for the puny strength of Mr E-SWAT.

So much for secrecy, eh guys?



GRAPHICS 80%

✗ The sprites soon become repetitive as you shoot yet another bloke in a brown coat.

✓ Lots of colour in the city backgrounds.

SOUND 68%

✗ Very irritating tune that never changes.

✗ Totally unimaginative sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 79%

✗ Too easy to get bogged down shooting the crooks instead of moving on.

✓ Plenty of new challenges to keep you going.

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MASTER SYSTEM

76%

CUTE
AND
CUDDLY
CHAOS!

SUMMER CAMP

By John Ferrari

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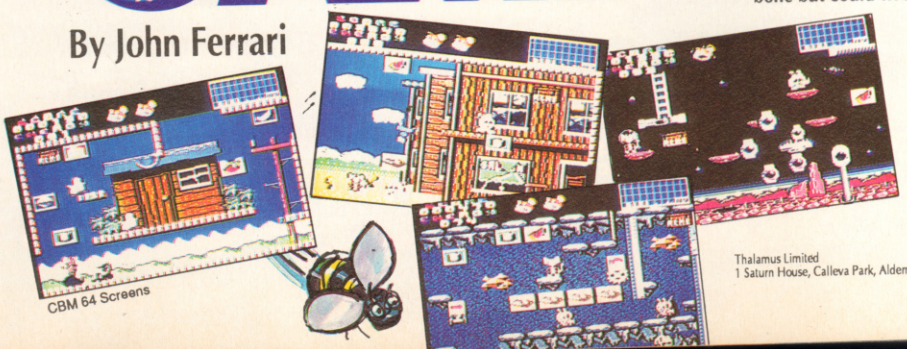

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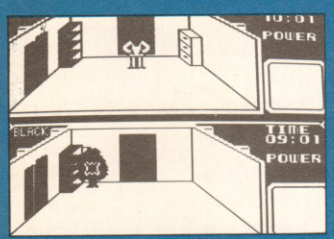
KEMCO/FIRST STAR
■ ARCADE STRATEGY

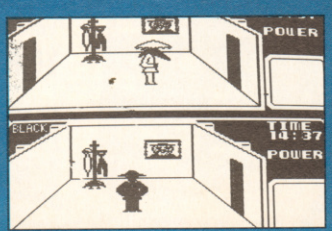
Move over Bond, move over Pond, ace secret agent Les Ellis is here to win one for the good guys

Just lately there seems to have been a spate of comic book heroes converted onto the small screen: Batman, The Punisher, Judge Dread, Rogue Trooper and so on. But many years ago, two heroes from MAD magazine made their debut on 8-bit computers and proved a smash hit with the punters, so popular that the game went on to spawn two sequels. Now the two madcap agents have taken their battle onto the NES, in the official Nintendo release of the classic *Spy vs Spy*.

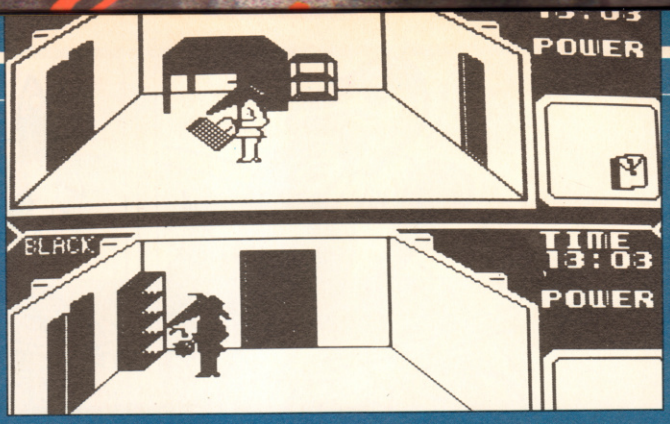
The eponymous spies – one black and one white – have been battling it out for years and now they come head to head in the innovative "simulvision" environment of the split screen action. Their first computer escapade takes place within embassies situated around the world (subsequent adventures were to take place on a desert island and at the North Pole). Each spy, using cunning and care, must search the embassy for items that will allow him to escape from the embassy, get to the airport and fly away, leaving the other spy to feel the wrath of the country's electric shock treatment.



Bye guys, I've got a plane to catch.

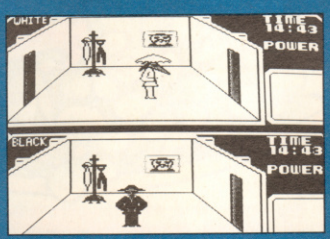


What a fine day for a walk in the park – I must remember to take my umbrella.



The action, which can be against the computer or against a friend, is viewed side-on on a split screen. Using this unique environment, you can keep an eye on the other spy's activities while you go on your own merry way – the usefulness of this will become apparent later on.

Items that you need to escape – the key, money, passport and some secret papers – are hidden within pieces of furniture in each of the rooms. Furniture can consist of anything, from a hat stand to a wall painting. Searching merely involves walking into the furniture, which then reveals anything behind it. You can only carry one item at a time, which means that you must first find the briefcase to put them all in.



It's wild, it's zany, it's weird, and it's definitely MAD!

Yeah, that all sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? But there was that little matter about the other spy to take into account. Of course, he is also looking for the briefcase etc, and will stop at nothing to get them. The infamous booby traps can be placed on every item in the embassy and when activated make the affected spy drop everything he owns. Water buckets can be placed over doors, which electrocute the next person to walk through them; bombs can be placed in furniture; a spring can be left in the middle of the room, as can a time bomb which, unlike the other traps, does not have an item to stop it. Both spies carry these booby traps so the game can soon degenerate into constant death for the spies as they walk into trap after trap.

The split screen action is very competitive, and it is essential that you keep an eye on the other player's activities, especially when it comes to laying traps. If the two players do end up in the same room, one player's screen turns off and the action switches to the other player's screen. If the two players confront each other in the room, they take part in hand-to-hand combat, each with a diminishing energy meter. If one player thinks the encounter may end in his death, he can quickly leave the room, effectively chickening out but saving the time he would have lost should he have died. Time is all-important as each embassy has its own limit, generous to start with but difficult as the embassies get larger.

GRAPHICS **76%**

✗ There never was must colour in any of the versions, and the NES version isn't going to change anything.

✓ All the little effects, like the sniggering spies, are faithful to the original.

SOUND **65%**

✗ The effects haven't been upgraded, and as a result sound a bit tinny.

✗ Annoying tune plays throughout the game.

PLAYABILITY **60%**

✓ Despite the poor graphics and sound there is something about this game that makes it extremely playable.

✓ Great fun, especially in two-player mode when you can booby trap everyone in sight.

£19.99 ▼ OUT NOW

NES

60%

Smiert Spionem.

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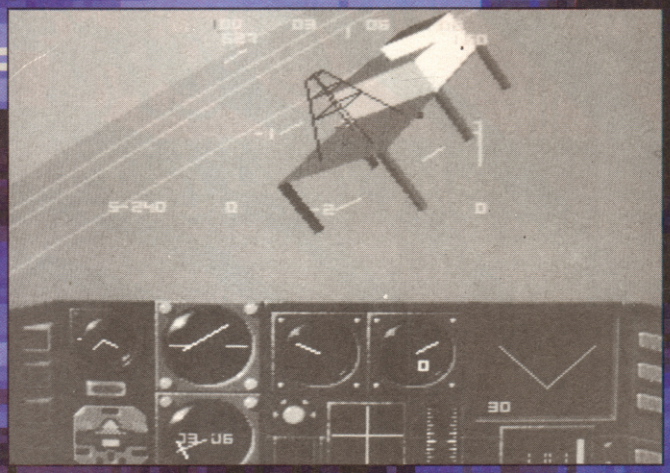
MIG-29 FULCRUM

DOMARK/SIMIS ■ FLIGHT SIMULATOR

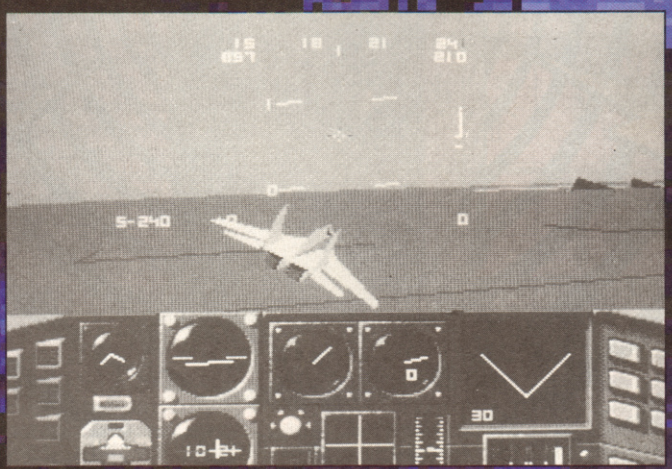
Ever since the MiG-29 Fulcrum made its triumphal appearance at Farnborough '88, there has been a large amount of media interest. Julian Boardman inspects the first simulation of this impressive aircraft



The MiG makes a flypast of an oil rig, one of the objectives of the third mission.

The Russian MiG-29 was initially looked upon by Westerners as an inferior aircraft to those currently in service with NATO. In fact, many saw it as an attempt to copy the American F-14 Eagle fighter. Stories of its remarkable aerodynamic qualities allowing it to perform unheard of manoeuvres were discounted as propaganda or mere flukes. Only when the MiG-29 performed these high stress manoeuvres several times at the Farnborough Air Display of 1988, and Western test pilots flew it for themselves, was it considered as the truly excellent design it really was.

It has taken two years for the first of the computer simulations to emerge, no doubt others will follow but they may find it difficult to match the accuracy of this particular simulation. The only European test pilot to fly the MiG-29, John Farley, has been closely involved with the playtesting of the model, and has pronounced himself satisfied with the way the vector graphic simulation has captured the aerodynamic behaviour of the real thing. It accurately mirrors the "Tailslide", a breathtaking manoeuvre where the plane climbs to the vertical only to fall backwards for several seconds then resume normal flight as the nose drops back down. The "Tailslide" exerts stresses on engine and wings that few Western fighters could match. The version he was most happy with was the IBM PC's complex model which behaves as near to the real thing as a PC can get. However, he said the simple version of the model used for the Amiga, Atari ST and an option on the PC, was more than adequate. It is also a lot simpler to fly than the complex PC one.

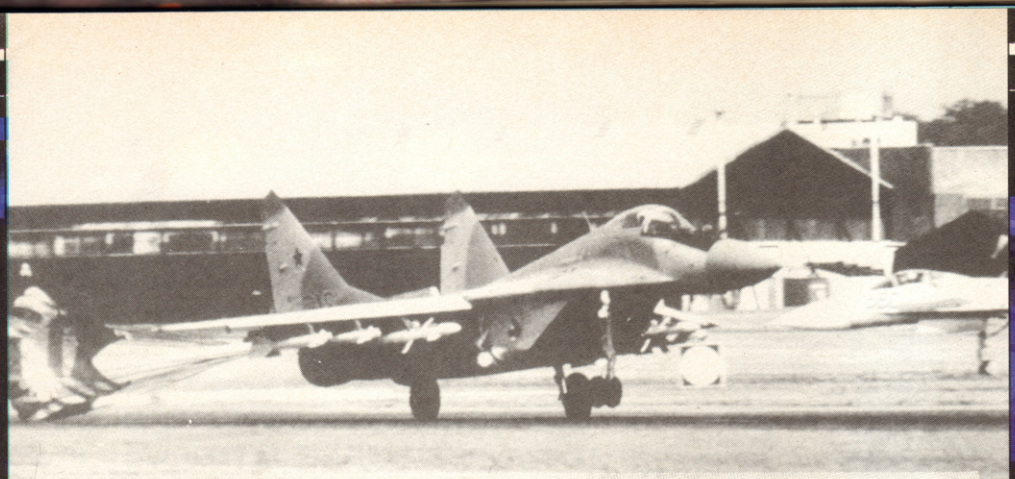


Here we can see clearly the HUD (head-up-display) during a dog fight situation.

There are six missions on which the MiG-29 has to fly, the first being a training mission, the last simply called "Final" which can only be played if a certain score is achieved. The latter involves your single MiG attempting to destroy a nuclear installation that threatens Soviet sovereignty. No problem.

As you progress through the missions, they will introduce you into different aspects of flying the plane, from going to a target and coming back, through using the various weapons and defences on board to using all aspects at once in the "Final".

There are over a quarter of a billion people in the USSR.



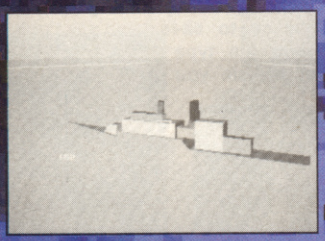
IMPRESS/BORE YOUR FRIENDS MIG-29 FULCRUM DATA

(source: Jane's Defence Weekly)

- Powerplant – 2 Tumansky R-33D turbofans.
- Thrust/weight ratio – approx 1:1 at sea-level.
- Max speed – Mach 2.2 (1.06 at sea-level).
- Max rate of climb at sea-level – 15,240 m/min.
- Combat Radius – 620nm.

Each of the missions has four navigational waypoints preset into the MiG computer, 0-3, with waypoint 0 always being over your home base. These waypoints can be selected and their direction will be shown on the compass band of the head-up-display (HUD).

The HUD is the main way for the pilot to read his instruments. Each of the major instruments, like the compass and the artificial horizon, are duplicated on the HUD so the pilot does not have to take his



eyes off the skies for a moment. The HUD will display such things as the type of weapon selected, airspeed, when the guided missiles have a good lock and so on. It will also give information about the attitude of the plane, the way it is flying. For example, in a tight turn the nose will drop but this is not always obvious and an instrument graphically shows the attitude of the nose. Or you can see the rate of climb or descent of the plane, useful for any situation where the MiG has to come in close to the ground.

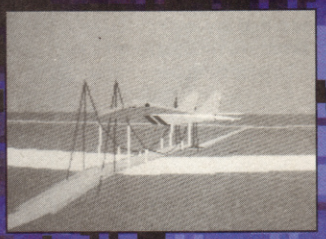
The head-down-display displays things such as undercarriage status, throttle power and systems status as well as all the major instruments. The amount of G-force the MiG is subjected to is displayed, and should it reach over 9.5G, nearly ten times the force of gravity and the average point at which pilots black out, the screen will go black for a second simulating a black out. You will still be in control but unable to see anything until the Gs are reduced.

The MiG is able to carry four different types of weapon: cannon, guided air-to-surface rockets, unguided air-to-air missiles and guided air-to-ground missiles. Obviously, only a very small number of missiles can be carried so it pays to use them wisely, waiting for a good, red lock until the air-to-air missiles are fired.

Controls are either keyboard, joystick and keyboard, or mouse and keyboard, with the joystick or the mouse assuming the role of the pilot's joystick, other controls like throttle, rudder and missile targeting being accessed from the keyboard. Mouse and joystick can have three sensitivity levels depending on your preference and the situation you are in.

The usual range of views are here as is expected for a vector-based game. There's a moveable view outside the aircraft, one from just behind, a missile view and even an enemy view so you can watch that missile coming in at supersonic speeds. All good stuff.

Domark's flight sim of the MiG-29 Fulcrum is probably one of the most accurate behavioural models you're likely to play. But this isn't too surprising when you consider the programmers, SIMIS, used to work on the full size flight simulations for British Aerospace. It is also highly engrossing, as each of the missions needs a high level of concentration to be completed



successfully. Domark can only be congratulated on an excellent flight simulation (and they give you a free book about the MiG-29 as well!).

GRAPHICS **89%**

✗ Sadly the amount of colour has to be sacrificed for speed.

✓ Realistic fast-moving polygons giving a great feeling of speed.

SOUND **79%**

✗ The basic PC sound is almost non-existent.

✓ Supports Roland and AdLib soundboards.

PLAYABILITY **89%**

✓ Incredible accuracy in the complex model.

✓ Six very taxing and involving missions.

£29.99 ▼ 1/91

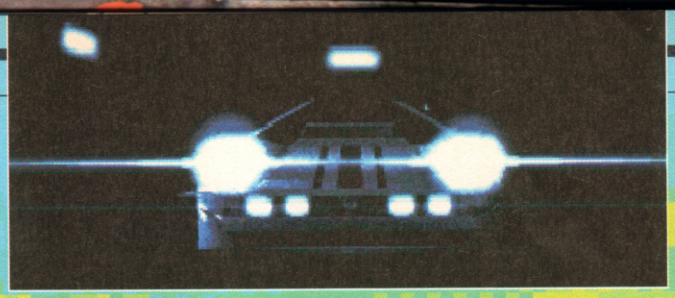
IBM PC

87%

The Amiga and Atari ST versions (£24.99) will not feature the complex model, but the high level of gameplay should still be intact. Some detail may have to be lost, but 1Mb machine owners should enjoy a hell of a game.

PREVIEW

The area of the Soviet Union is over 8.6 million square miles.



Agghh, where's everyone gone! Don't fret, it's only the night-time stage of Nitro.

NITRO

PSYGNOSIS ■ RACING GAME

This futuristic version of Super Sprint was just the thing to lighten the pre-Christmas blues. Les Ellis felt that only he could withstand the laughing gas

The race is on. There's £1 million up for grabs, four continents to visit, three months to endure, and 32 tracks to conquer. They've tried to stop it, they've tried to ban it, but it is still the most popular sporting event since they outlawed *Future Basketball*. Up to three people can take part – each represented by either Roger Moore, Clint Eastwood or Sylvester Stallone characters – with at least one computer-controlled car adding massacre to the mayhem that already exists.

There are basically four types of track, the four continents. The first track places you in the middle of city. Pedestrians stroll around the streets, while the track twists and bends like the proverbial snake.

The second type of race takes place within the greeny surroundings of a "lively" forest. The roads are narrow and dirty, with rock falling onto the track and grass and hedges growing in the middle of the track.

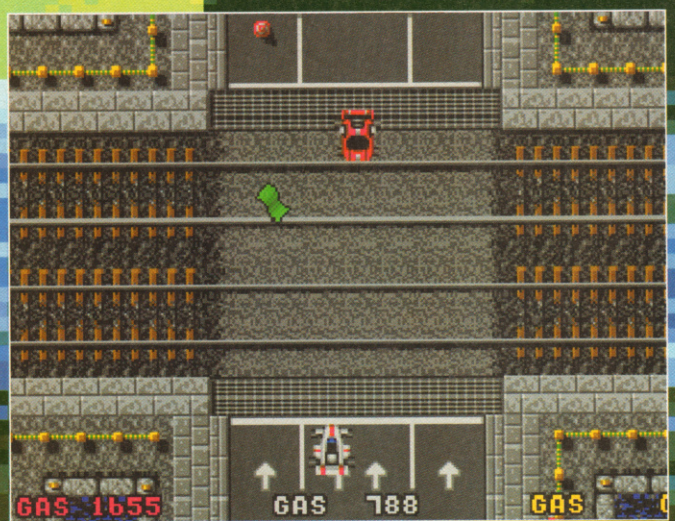
From the forest you go to the choking sands of the desert. The whole area is ridden with burst oil pipes and palm trees, while deserted planes provide obstacles that must be avoided if you are to progress to the last track variation.

The Holocaust is the ultimate challenge. If you thought the potholes in the city level where deep, just take a look at these suckers, one tyre over the edge and you're history, falling deep into a bottomless hole.

As is with most fun racing games, there are plenty of things to pick up, both good and bad. These range from barrels of nitro, which will boost the speed of your car for a while, to fuel, invaluable if you're to get around the track. You could also come across bulbs which are useful for your headlights on night-time stages, but watch out for dark bulbs which blow the lights fuse in your car making the night stages a real pig. If you're car isn't up to what you're familiar with just collect loads of coins and upgrade after the race in the motormart.

A visit to the motormart is essential if you're to keep up with the computer players. Here you can buy a more powerful engine, turbo charger, high-grip tyres, nitro boosters, more gas or repair any damage. There are also special offers which vary from level to level. You are also given the chance to change the type of vehicle you

Forget the turning, just go for the cash!



GRAPHICS **75%**

✗ Lacks the usual Psygnosis intro screens.

✓ A wide range of detailed and challenging tracks.

SOUND **74%**

✗ Annoying squeals and grunts.

✓ Great title score with loads of in-game tunes.

PLAYABILITY **79%**

✗ Disk loading between races is a real pain.

✓ More pedestrians and challenges than the Amiga version.

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ATARI ST

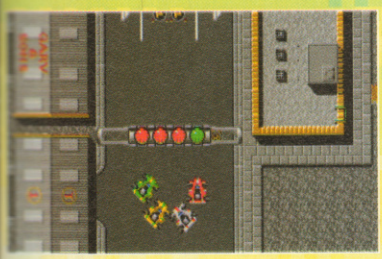
81%

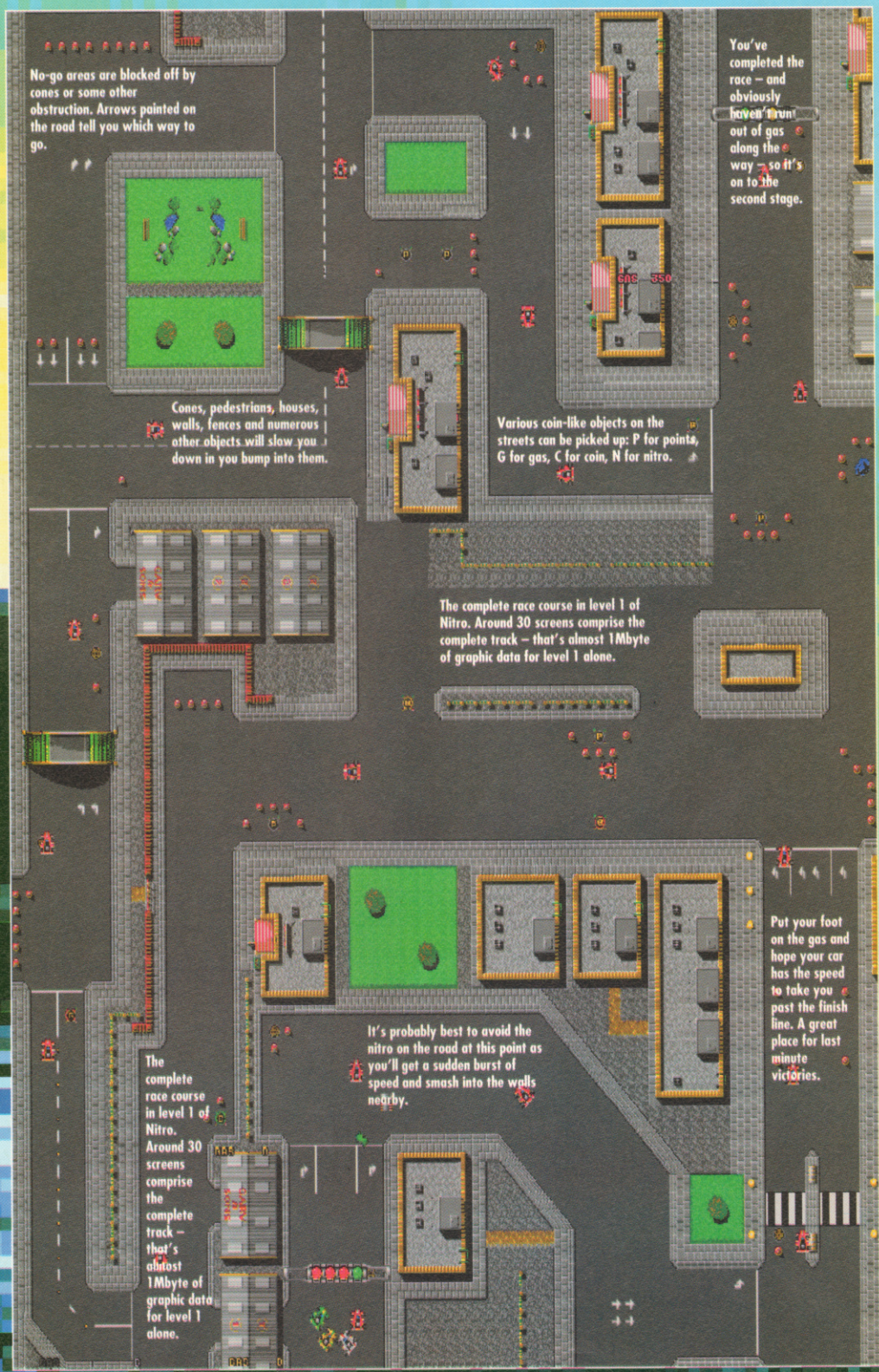
Nitroglycerin = $CH_2NO_3CHNO_3CH_2NO_3$.

are driving, from a formula one racer to a sports car to a turbo buggy.

The wide variation of features – cars, pick-ups etc – makes *Nitro* a bit deeper than the old favourite *Super Sprint*, so it's a pity that the playability isn't as compelling as the Activision classic. Multi-player action is all very well, but all 32 stages were completed by Julian and I on the second try. You call that a challenge?

The opening screens (Amiga only) of Psygnosis's Nitro tell the tale of how a young racer took on the post-holocaust community in an attempt to rid the planet of vicious killing... Actually they don't say much at all.





GRAPHICS **60%**
✓ Well designed tracks, with scenery to match.
✓ Title screens and in-game intermission are a treat.

SOUND **74%**
✗ Annoying, unrealistic engine noises start to bug you after a while.
✓ Decent title tune and ditties.

PLAYABILITY **75%**
✗ After the concept is mastered, it's pretty easy to complete.
✓ The initial attraction of trying to see all 32 tracks is strong.

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AMIGA

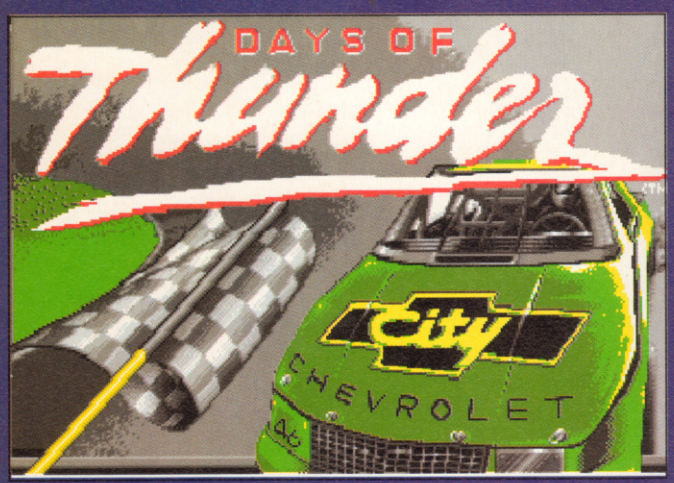
79%

Where there's a will there's a relative.

MINDSCAPE ■ DRIVING SIM

After his Tom Cruise hair cut going wrong, Julian Boardman got back to basics and returned to the track

Tom Cruise's latest teeth and action outing – yet again denying his real talents as an actor – was an obvious choice for a licence. Big budget promotional for the film capitalised on the mass-market audience and made it easy to move in on computer-owning filmgoers. Even with the time lapse between the film and this NES version, there should still be enough lasting interest to keep a flooded Christmas market interested in another version.



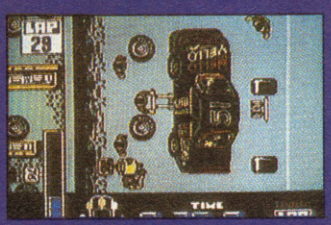
Push it, push it. Faster, faster. The NES version of *Days of Thunder* uses a completely different graphics system from the computer versions.

The task of the game, just in case you've been doing a passable impression of John the Baptist for the last six months, is to complete eight races on seven tracks and ultimately win the Series Cup. Racing in a field of 16 cars you must qualify for each race then go on to be high enough in the table to race in the series final at Daytona, which is also where your season starts.

Clearly, the ambitious polygons and camera angles of the 16-bit versions were never possible on the 8-bit NES, so the game has been totally redesigned. There's a Game Boy version coming soon too and that also will use the new perspective. You now view from behind Cole Trickle's car, the full width of the track being seen on the screen. It gives the effect of one of those LCD games where the main object moves across a fixed background – fortunately it works in a much smoother and eye-pleasing way, and also makes it more of a game than the simulation of the 16-bit versions.

Controls are a little difficult to get used to. Unlike the majority of games, just a single press of the button will prompt continued acceleration or deceleration. The progress, or lack of it, being arrested by a push of the opposite control. This may at first lead to a situation where you think you have braked to just the right speed for the banked turn, release the brake and the damn thing keeps on slowing down. It can take a deft touch to coax just the right sort of control out your car.

Beneath the driving screen is a dashboard showing speed, revs and the damage status of the six elements of the car: four tyres, the engine, and the fuel tank. These elements can be assessed so the best time for a pit stop can be chosen. Pit stops are difficult a little number to get used to, but it all adds to the hilarity. It is all too simple to find yourself racing through the pit lane, forgetting to stop, and having to wait another lap to get the damage sorted. The pit crew are all individually controlled, each man having a separate duty, one to jack up the car, the other to change the tyres, another to refuel. These tasks must be completed very quickly and it takes practise to get the level of accuracy in the control of the crew so the car can be straight in and out of the pits. Of course, if you don't keep hitting the side of track, you won't have to keep visiting the pits, will you?



The flop movie could prove to be a surprise hit on the NES.

The game is exceptionally well presented. There is a nice opening sequence where old Tom rides up to the entrance of the track on his Harley giving the game a filmic feel.

The element of competition is obviously one of the plus points of this game, fighting for the title at Daytona if you can get there. Can you do it? Even if you can't, you should still give it a go because this is one the better race games on the NES.

Take a quick look at your car's situation from the small representation on the right of the dashboard.

GRAPHICS **85%**
✓ Unusually large, colourful and bold sprites for the NES.
✓ A very professional feel to the whole presentation.

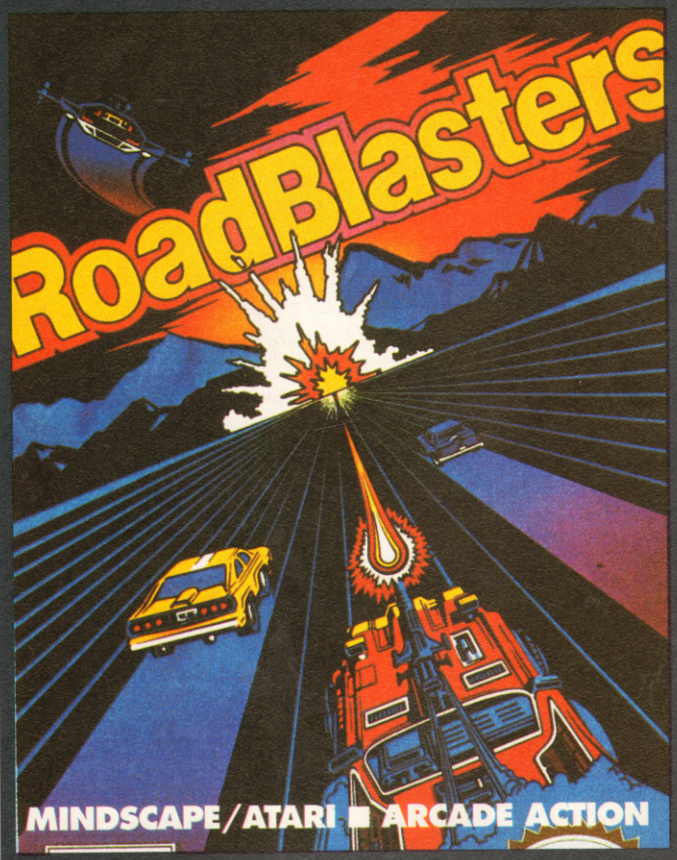
SOUND **74%**
✗ No Maria McKee or David Coverdale tunes.
✓ A variety of engine noises that reflect the revs, bumping etc.

PLAYABILITY **82%**
✗ Slightly awkward control system.
✓ An accurate game that captures the action and speed of the film.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

NES

81%



Yet another old chestnut has reappeared on two consoles, the Lynx and the NES. Julian Boardman buys one of those beady things so he can get more comfortable in the driving seat

Apparently everyone knew the war was coming, so why did no-one stop it? Rival factions in our own government had caused a devastating civil war, the Death Squads had unleashed awesome nuclear weapons in their ruthless attempts to take over the planet, but they had prepared well ensuring all their evil members survived. At their disposal they have some high-powered vehicles that can withstand the extremes of fall-out and a nuclear winter. They have enough food to survive for as long as it takes in their specially constructed cities.

This build up had obviously been taking place over a number of years, and a smart scientist managed to defect before the war, taking with him a prototype of one of the Death Squads' armoured vehicles and a few weapons capable of destroying others like it.

The DSs have organized a road race, a dangerous trial of time and distance. But the little dears have set up the road so that it's covered in mines, and surrounded by death-dealing pillboxes (not pillar-boxes!). You must take on the might of the DSs and pose as one of them, using this race as an opportunity to drive right into the heart of their headquarters. The odds are, well, not exactly in your favour, but the fate of a decent civilization rests upon your shoulders. Still, there's no pressure, just go out there and do your best, that's all we ask.

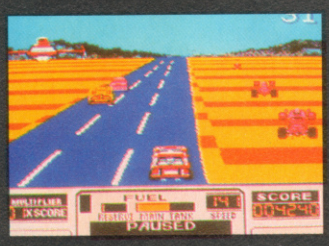
To get to the headquarters, you must drive through 50 levels, each time reaching the rally point at the end before your fuel runs out. On your way you will come across many of the other DS cars, these must be shot to gain points. The more points you get the more reserve fuel you are awarded at the end of each race. Also, if you increase your accuracy it will result in a multiplier bonus – every time you hit a car it goes up by one, if you miss it drops by one.

The scientist has also managed to set up a robot plane that will drop the weapons he managed to blag when he left. These weapons differ according to the level, and can be cruise missiles, which act like smart bombs, artillery, nitros and so on. All of them come in limited amounts, but if you crash you lose the lot.

Crashing is far too easy, there are a number of cars on the road but only the yellow ones can be shot, and there are all sorts of mines and roadside hazards that are designed to stunt your progress in the race.

As the car is powered by radioactive fuel there are a number of fuel globes dotted around the track, remnants from the war, that can be driven over to add to your supplies, crucial if you are to finish.

RoadBlasters plays in much the same way as *Fire and Forget*, an into the screen shoot-'em-up on the road, but the simple idea works very well. Once the early levels have been completed, it starts to become very testing and actually quite addictive as your determination to succeed increases. Even though both versions were designed independently, comments of game content apply equally.



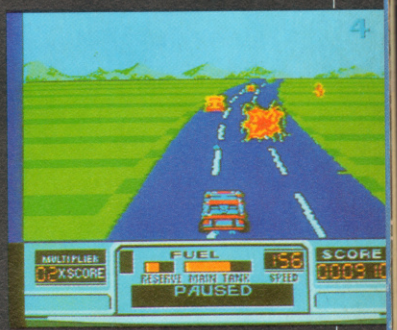
A few off-road racers on the right as the robot plane drops a new weapon from the top left.

GRAPHICS **78%**
✓ Bubble City's a great example of the interesting backgrounds.
✓ Good animation and big, garish sprites.

SOUND **70%**
✗ Lack of decent accompanying tunes.
✓ Spot effects like the explosions aren't too bad.

PLAYABILITY **81%**
✓ Waves and waves of cars to blast and blast!
✓ With 50 levels it should take some time to finish them all.

£19.99 ▼ OUT NOW
NES
80%



Loads of fuel in the main tank, but the reserve shouldn't be relied on for much back-up.

GRAPHICS **83%**
✓ The screen is rich with colour.
✓ A wide range of well animated and fast sprites.

SOUND **85%**
✗ Pretty poor speech synthesis, but heaps of it.
✓ Very good spot effects especially the robot plane.

PLAYABILITY **83%**
✗ Takes time to get used to the various road positions of the car.
✓ Far more challenging than the NES version. And very fast.

£29.99 ▼ OUT NOW
LYNX
84%

TOYOTA CELICA

GREMLIN
GRAPHICS ■ RALLY SIMULATION

For some reason, Julian Boardman gets to review all the racing games. Strange really, because he's no good at any of them

There is something far more adventurous about rally driving than there ever could be about track racing. Rallying is more about being at one with the car on every sort of surface under the sun – using the handbrake to slide it around the corner, braking and blipping the accelerator at the same time as you change down (known as heel & toeing), using every bit of yourself to get that vital second from the leader.

GT Rally puts you, and up to three other players (on a very big front seat), behind the wheel of Toyota's most successful rally car of the decade, the Celica GT4. You must pit your driving skills against an international array of tracks and competitors, from your behind-the-wheel view of the road. Through the 30 stages of the World Championship, you and your co-driver will face a variety of track and weather conditions – ice, snow, desert, etc – each designed to test your driving skills to the full.

Controls are mercifully simple, forward to accelerate, back to brake, and fire (or cursors if you're using the mouse) to start the engine and change gear if you're foolishly using manual gears. The joystick and the mouse have three sensitivity levels, depending on your level of skill. Although having a slow responding car results in less swerving around the road, you'll come into difficulty on later levels because you won't be able to overcome the sharp corners.

The really clever part is the speech synthesised co-driver, which allows you to choose from seven different remarks, such as "Right" "Hard Left" and "Left then Right" to describe each of the twist and turns on the stage.

There is a default co-driver to save you the effort of going through each track, but he is basic at the best – ie, "Left" or "Right" – and it makes sense to provide your own as you get further into the World Championships.

Should you somehow fail to negotiate a corner, and the feeling of the back of the car sliding out has been captured beautifully, you may be able to rejoin the track, but in most cases it will cost you a 20 second penalty. Your car is then placed back on the track and the engine must be restarted – and believe me it does not always start first time, costing you more valuable seconds.

There are some nice graphic touches like windscreen wipers, and a shattered windscreen after a crash.

Gremlin have managed to come up with another great racer. It may not be in the same league as Lotus, but it's pretty damn close. It plays well and encourages braking and gear changes, which is more than many other similar games I could name.

GRAPHICS **85%**

✗ Scrolling of trackside objects could have been smoother.

✓ Never any problem seeing where the road is.

SOUND **84%**

✓ Synthesised speech is always very clear.

✓ While some effects are a little bland, the crash really makes you wince.

PLAYABILITY **86%**

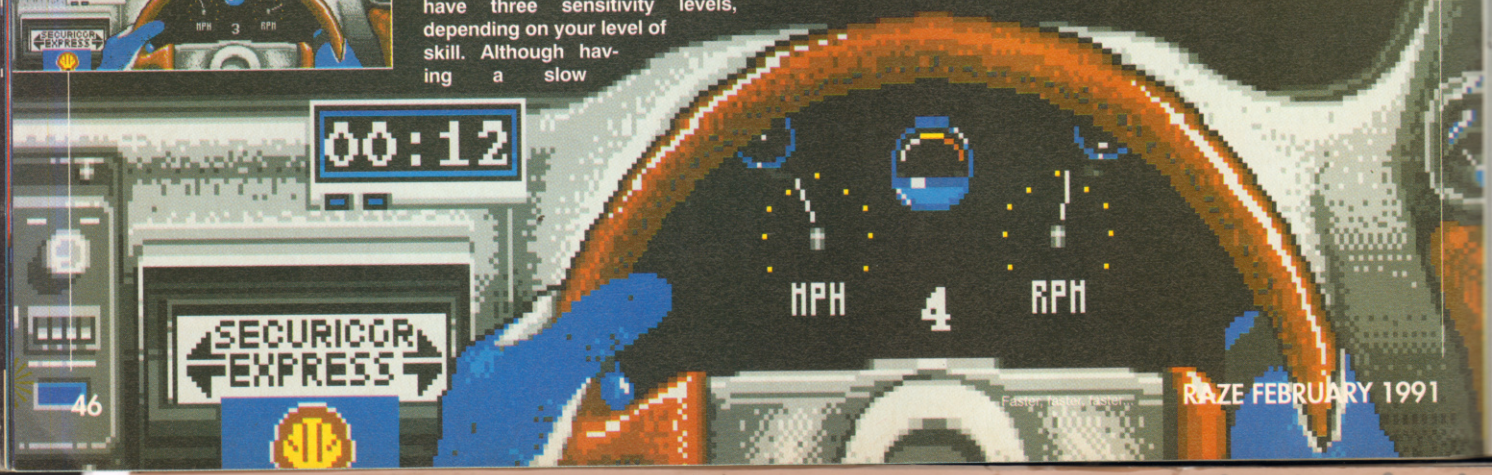
✓ Very simple controls make it easy to begin play.

✓ 30 very difficult tracks to keep anyone happy.

GREMLIN ▼ OUT NOW

AMIGA

86%



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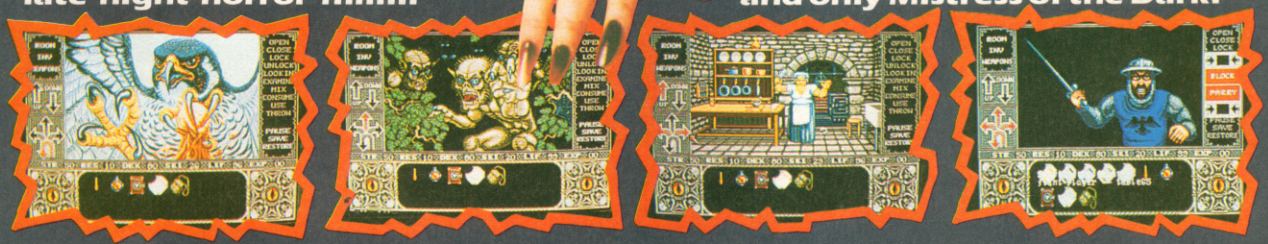

Screenshots from IBM PC version.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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HARD DRIVIN' 2

DOMARK ■ DRIVING SIM

Just as he was about to pack his golf clubs, Julian Boardman was given a sound clip round the ear and told to get the car keys instead

Well, here I go again, old Jools is racing past the polygons, through the loops and round the flaming bend. This is yet another of those stunt/racing thingies that seem to be all over the place this Christmas.

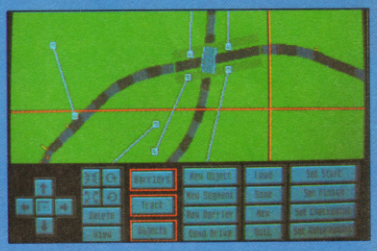
By virtue of the fact that it is the sequel to the seminal, but flawed, *Hard Drivin'* it does deserve a little special attention. It is not, however, a true sequel, more of a *Hard Drivin' Plus* or a *Special Edition*. *Hard Drivin' II: Drive Harder* includes no fundamental additions, but some fairly impressive enhancements. The real sequel to *Hard Drivin'* is *Race Drivin'*, already in the arcades and expected on home computer for next Christmas.

The original was a conversion of the Tengen's popular arcade machine combining all the elements of the original, minus the broken wrist from the interactive steering wheel. It did the job, but it was flawed with some niggling glitches over the placing of some of the polygon vehicles. There were also some questions over the playability of the controls, somehow the steering didn't quite make the grade, but it was a bit of a laugh and captured fairly accurately the atmosphere of the original.

There are three main additions to this follow-up: three extra tracks, a track editor, and a head-to-head link-up that can connect any two of the three main 16-bit computers, Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC.

The three new tracks follow on in the tradition of the first, which is also included, in being reasonably simple in design but an absolute bugger to master successfully. But gradually they relinquish their secrets as you become more familiar with the layout and the components, and your skill at using the more playable system increases.

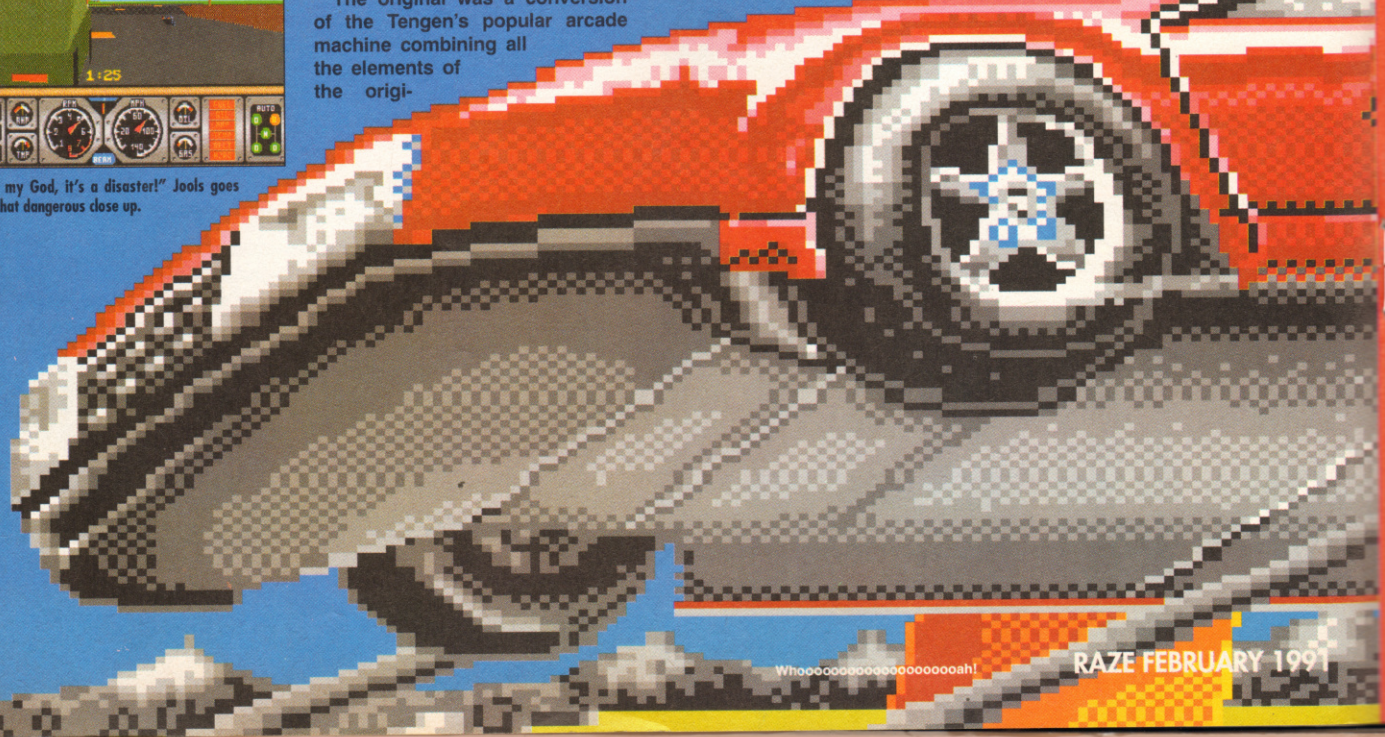
The track editor is based around the components of the first track and its surroundings, with a few elements of extra track being included in the library of parts at your disposal. Other items in the



Another shot of the Track Editor screen showing the positional crosshairs. The white lines represent the invisible barriers.

The follow-up includes three new tracks and the old favourite from the original.

"Oh my God, it's a disaster!" Jools goes for that dangerous close up.



Whoooooooooooooooooooah!

MEGA DRIVIN'

In the Sega column last issue, we briefly mentioned the forthcoming appearance of the original *Hard Drivin'* on the Mega Drive. Well it has arrived, in Japan at least. It looks identical to the original, making use of the same graphics as the year-old 16-bit versions. What is unusual is that this is the first game on the Mega Drive to use vector graphics, a concept unheard of on the sprite-oriented 16-bit machine. What should make it a very good version is that four-way controllers are surprisingly useful for driving games, but not always as good as mice. As soon as we can get hold of a legit copy we shall give you an import review.

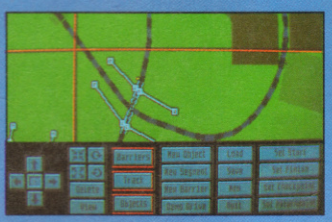
library include barns, petrol stations, shops and invisible barriers which stop all your mates trying to cut corners and dodge certain elements of the course, like the loop or the banked turn.

The editor screen invites you to select an element of track then use a set of crosshairs to place them on the area of green in front of you. Once the track and the hazards are laid, the warning signs, if you want them, can be placed and these signs cover just about every eventuality you could imagine. They also provide an opportunity to bluff your opponent in the head-to-head, perhaps encouraging him to make the wrong decision allowing you to whiz past, smiling your way into the lead.

Obviously all these tracks can be saved to disk, and all the tracks are compatible with all formats, so an Amiga owner can create a track and give it to his ST-owning friend down the road to compare performance.

However, should they wish to race head-to-head on any one of the four standard tracks, or a real bitch that they have created between themselves, that is also possible. By linking up the serial ports with a null modem cable, both players can race on their own computer from their own perspective, with the game running at the speed of the slowest computer. This gives the game a much needed edge over the previous version, providing a head-to-head competitiveness which is always guaranteed to lift any game's level of enjoyment, and certainly does to this.

Where a game like *4-D Sports Driving* is clearly a fast PC product, and will lose out a little on the slower Amiga and Atari ST, *Hard Drivin' II* is definitely more suited to the Amiga and ST, with the PC version being identical to these and not really living up to the capabilities of the machine.



Time marches on as we can see how faithful to the original this version is.

Hard Drivin' II use the sound basis of the original, cuts out all the bugs and minor playability problems, and builds on to it the game that will continue the *Hard Drivin'* legacy into the Nineties. Against some very stiff opposition, *Hard Drivin' II* should keep up with competition and in some occasions accelerate away.

The Track Editor screen. The red and orange area to the right is a hill, the diagonal is a section of raised track, and the track editor controls can be seen at the bottom.

GRAPHICS **88%**
✓ Good use of vectors and memory to create the right effect.
✓ Plenty of scenery that can be used to keep the daydreamers happy.

SOUND **79%**
✗ Not quite enough variety to enhance the feel of the game.
✓ Some meaty skids and bangs to get the bloodthirsty drooling.

PLAYABILITY **89%**
✗ It is a pity that course times aren't recorded.
✓ The course editor will definitely prolong the playing life of this game.

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AMIGA 87%

GRAPHICS **83%**
✗ Clearly not up to the true standard we expect of PC vector graphics.
✓ No problem with animation or with collision and placement glitches.

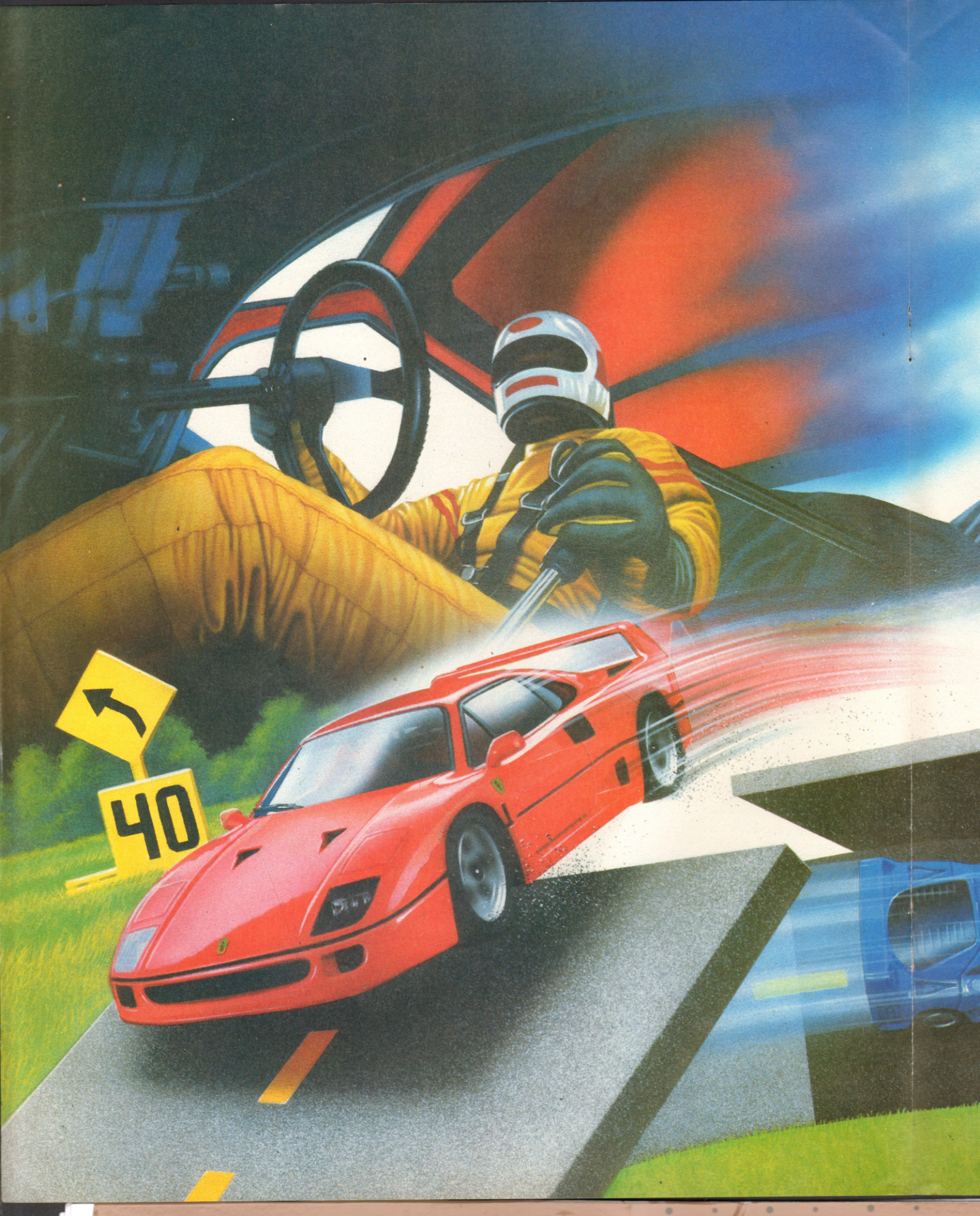
SOUND **87%**
✓ Supports all the soundboards to give realistic effects.
✓ Even the PC's own sound gives reasonably good output.

PLAYABILITY **88%**
✓ This version has far more manageable controls than the original.
✓ The two machine head-to-head means that the old rivalries come flooding back.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

IBM PC 86%

Fancy a test drive?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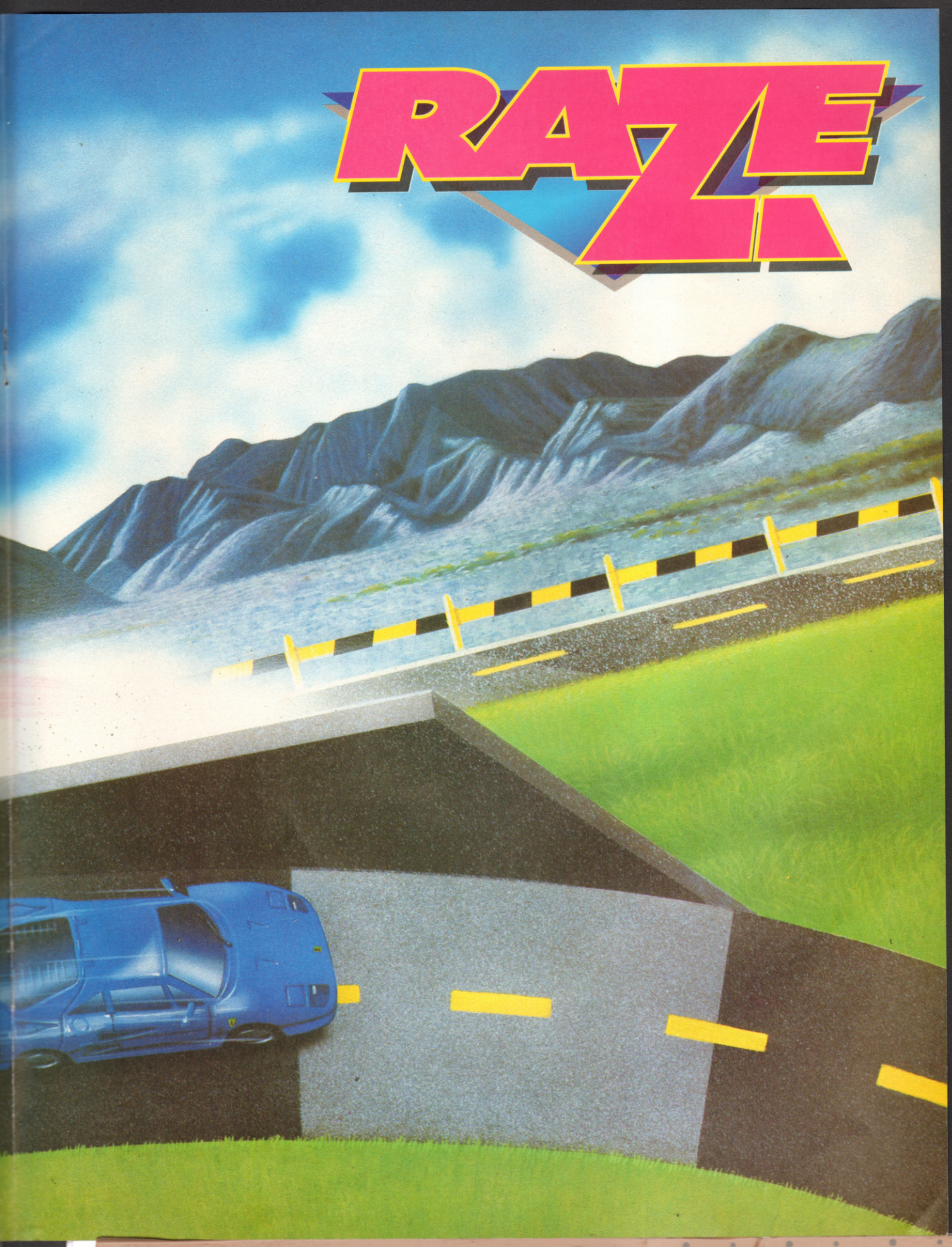

RAZE

RAVE

CRASH COURSE

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE/MIRRORSOFT ■ RACING CAR SIMULATOR

Paul Rigby straps in, buckles down and gets into gear with a brand-new Lambaskoda

I'll take your word for what a car can do.

Slam it down a few gears and hold on tight for you're about to jump the drawbridge.

Known as *Stunt Driver* in the States, Mirrorsoft decided to rename this new car simulation *Crash Course*. As such, it mixes the thrills and spills of MicroProse's *Stunt Car Racer* with the graphic excellence and multi-camera options of *Hard Drivin'*.

Arriving on four 5.25-inch 360K disks and a 54-page manual, *Crash Course* drops you into a Shelby '66 Mustang racing against 0-3 cars with 0-3 different opponents across five standard courses, three custom courses and any number of others constructed by yourself using the editor. There is also a neat option that allows you to connect two machines together, just like *Hard Drivin' II*. The races are held over tracks in major cities from all over the world – San Francisco, London, New York, Tokyo, Paris – and a forest region.

The view of the 3-D polygon environment is through the windscreen with the steering wheel to the left and driver's hand appearing during turns. On the dashboard, situated on the base of the screen, is the speedometer and tachometer plus one or two frilly dials of no apparent use. Apart from the usual steering and pedal controls, you can also opt for manual or automatic gears. In manual, you will need to watch the rev counter and change the gears using a mixture of rev count and sound from the PC speaker (or AdLib soundboard if you have one). While appreciably more difficult to use, the manual gear option gives you greater control and faster acceleration. Other options include a cruise control which keeps the speed constant, a horn to drive the car in front absolutely crazy and a nitrous oxide button that gives your car a bit more zip for a limited period (you're given ten seconds of nitrous oxide fuel).

Other keyboard commands toggle the dashboard on/off, the engine sounds on/off, pause, sounds effects on/off and the horizon on/off. Many of the latter will speed up the gameplay – handy for slower machines.

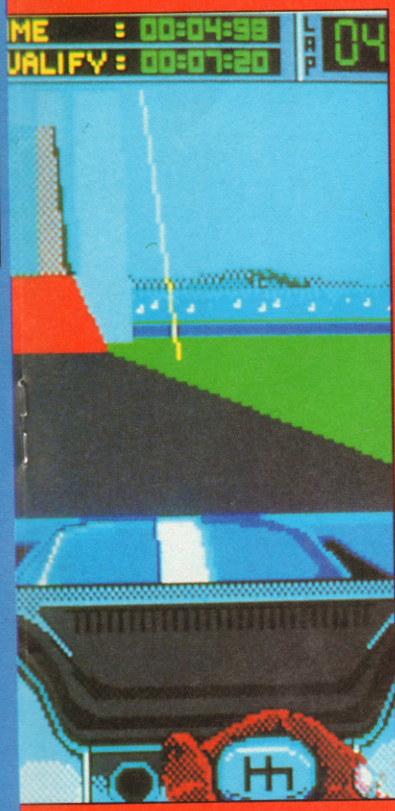
The objective of *Crash Course* is to win. It doesn't matter how you do it, though (heh, heh). Before you dive into the hotseat you must decide upon a difficulty level. Trainee pits you against the

TOTAL CONTROL

Hazards such as oil slicks make life difficult on the non-stunt areas. If you do crash, you have the option to view the crash from any angle and at different speeds using the VCR feature. When in play, you see the VCR controls at the bottom off the screen. The tape counter and status indicator provide valuable info in addition to the counter reset. The player also comes complete with some trick options which allow you to adjust the speed of play.

One of the best features of the game is the course editor. When you access this option you're presented with a large, clear course window divided into equally sized squares. To the left of this area is a smaller section containing umpteen different course sections. Section types include basic road types (straight, gentle bend, acute bend, etc), oil slicks, grandstands, corkscrew jump, drawbridge, loop, garage, hill, start/finish, trees, houses, rivers, power tower, a piece which is crowded with crash dummy people, etc, etc.

Course building is simply a matter of clicking on a piece and then clicking on an empty square in the course window. Once you've completed the new course (and it obeys a few rules such as the track being continuous, having a start/finish line, etc) then you can name, save and load the course into the game ready for play.



clock. Rookie allows you to race against one or all of the opponents but they do not have a personality. Expert is similar to Rookie but each driver personality will have a bearing on how the race is run.

You'll also be able to select the type of cars you want to race against: a VW Bug, an IROC-Z and a Porsche 911. After that you select a course and enter your first race.

The driver's controls are on the base of the screen but on the top lies the lap counter, total laps in the race, information on your opponents and damage taken. You can take damage from falling off a stunt, smashing into another car, and hitting a fence or other obstacles. You can repair damage by nipping into the pits. A bar counter tells you how long the job will take.

There are a variety of views you can access that can make for some pretty thrilling crash sequences! Besides front, rear, left and right, you can access a helicopter view which is positioned above and behind your car. There are a variety of other camera positions placed at strategic points around the track (just like the telly!) that will pick you up onscreen and pan as you move by, another camera further down the line will then take over (very similar to *Days of Thunder*). Another option gives you the camera views on your opponents. Other options allow you to move hither and thither between selected camera positions.

Stunts within the race courses are big, brash and spectacular. There is the famous loop, the hump back bridge, the high speed curve, the open drawbridge, etc. If you miss a stunt or any section of the course (either by accident or on purpose) you'll incur time penalties that may lose you the race. It is possible to miss out sections by driving over the land area.

Driving in *Crash Course* is difficult at first. I found myself spinning and skidding all over the place initially. However, you do come to grips with the steering, but it takes much practise. Control is pretty subtle, it is suicidal to be too heavy handed. Speed is not the primary concern. Control is everything, so if you're a speed demon, find something else to play with. I found myself bouncing between 40 and 100 mph which is hardly Nicki Lauda is it? But that's not to say that *Crash Course* is boring due to the relatively slow pace. Far from it, the sensation of speed (when it does build up) is good, the stunts demand a lot of practise because you will need to manoeuvre yourself carefully and watch the speed to be successful. Too slow and you will either fall off the loop halfway or fall into the river (in the middle of the drawbridge) and be eaten by a shark. Too fast and you'll fly through the air and crash spectacularly.

Overall, a totally absorbing driving sim more akin to Hard Drivin' than Super Monaco GP.

Crash Course has to be the best driving game available on the IBM PC. Apart from the great driving experience itself, there are so many options available to modify the game that, even if you're not too happy with it initially, just a few tweaks will give you everything you could ask for! How about a few weird and wonderful course scenery disks, Spectrum Holobyte?

GRAPHICS **96%**
✓ Superbly detailed solid 3-D vector graphics.
✓ Great use of colour and realistic viewpoints.

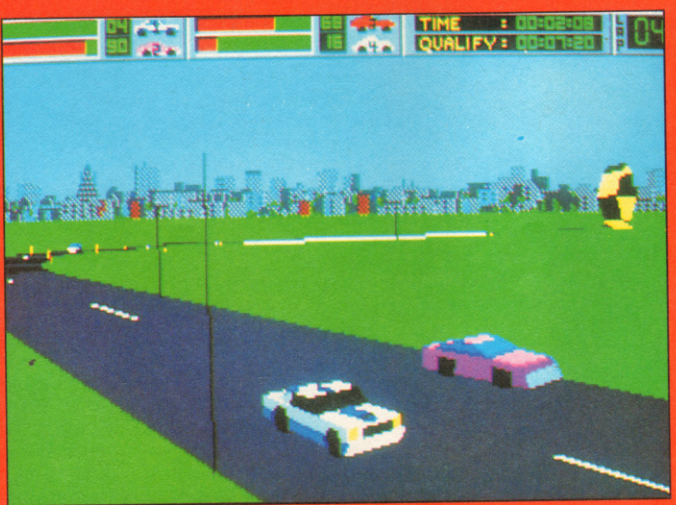
SOUND **77%**
✗ As always a disappointment on a standard PC.
✓ Lots of sound effects like skids, revving engines and backfiring exhausts.

PLAYABILITY **93%**
✓ So many options that provide almost unlimited styles of play.
✓ The best driving game on the PC.

£34.99 ▼ OUT NOW

IBM PC 91%

Just like on TV, a camera will pick up and focus on a car and then pan through the shot following the car till the next camera can pick it up.



But I ain't taking anyone's word for what I can do.

THE OPPOSITION

ETHEL MOEZES

You've driven behind her type before. Slow, annoying and generally a pain to manoeuvre around. She has a really foul temper and doesn't like people passing her, so she'll try to get in your way as much as possible. Once you get past her on the road, you won't have to worry. Unless, of course, if you try to lap her!

LIKES: Wednesday night bingo, gin rummy and The Generation Game.

DISLIKES: Foul language, strained carrots and people who don't use turn signals.

BLAKE `SHYSTER' FITZWATER

Blake's a lawyer and a darn good one. However, the poor driving skills of those reckless drivers he's defended seem to have rubbed off on him since he weaves all over the road. If you somehow make it past him, you're safe. The big problem is getting past him!

LIKES: polo, nouvelle cuisine and a night at the opera.

DISLIKES: Tap water, TV dinners and other lawyers.

JIMMY `SKID' ROWE

After flunking high school at 19, Skid took to the streets. He cares only for his car and nothing else. Especially other drivers. The one thing Jimmy hates more than anything is people getting in front of him during a race. This really ticks him off, and he'll chase you down to knock you off the road if he can. So if you pass him, watch your back!

LIKES: Fast cars, fast women, slow gin.

DISLIKES: Cars faster than his, imported beer and speed limits.

4-D SPORTS DRIV

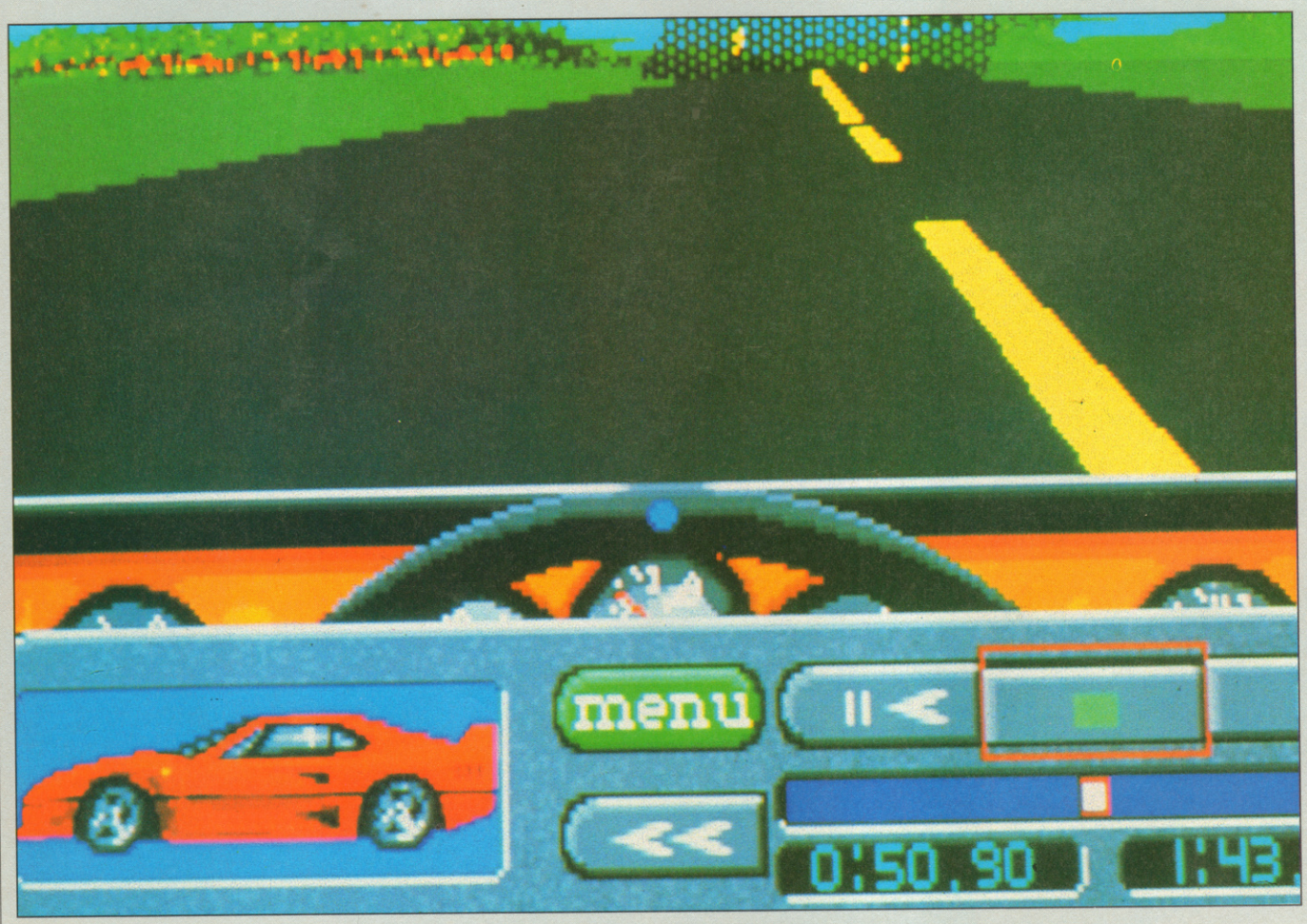
MINDSCAPE/DSI ■ DRIVING SIMULATION

At the risk of appearing repetitive, Julian Boardman pulls on the leather gloves again and steps into another super stunt car

The creators of the latest in Mindscape's 4-D games series are the same bright young sparks who brought you *Test Drives 1 & 2*. In fact, the Canadian DSI team seem to have been working remarkably hard on this particular pretender to the stunt driving simulation crown. This Christmas promises to be for stunt driving what last year was for racing games (Power Drift, Turbo Out Run, Chase HQ). But the Christmas cheer of *Test Drive III, Hard Drivin' II* and *Crash Course* could be spoilt with the release of this under-hyped, under-priced, under-dog.

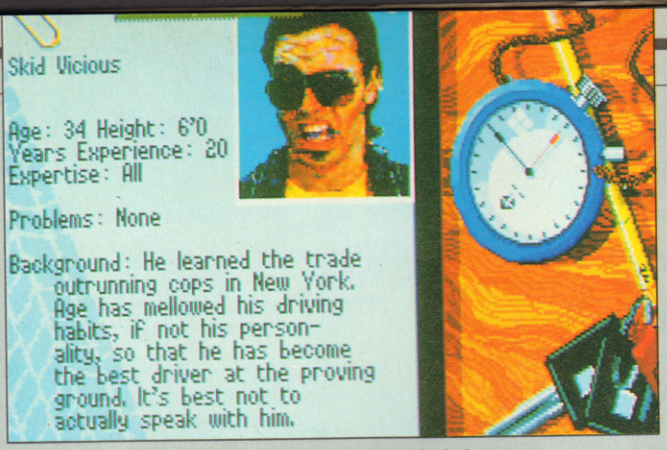
In much the same way as *The Duel: Test Drive II*, *4-D Sports Driving* pits you against other drivers in a gorgeous range of sleek machinery, but this time the race is run over seven different tracks.

Once the (easiest) driver has been selected, and the (simplest) track has been chosen, you must choose your mode of transport. The range goes from a jeep to a 25th anniversary Lambourghini. What you must consider here is that each of the computer cars will mirror the performance of their real life counterparts. So if you're on a dirt track, an Indy 500 vehicle will obviously not be all that suitable. This is where you can make or break your races against the computer; give him a dud car and he'll end up nowhere, no matter how good the driver is. Of course, if you want a real challenge, you will naturally choose the car best suited to your track. You can pick your own car through the same process, or, if you're really impatient, you can choose the default settings and go



This is one of the replays. The VCR-like controls allow a great deal of flexibility in what you watch.

VING



Gee, what a dude. This opponent should probably have been drowned at birth.

With all the car games around, here's a familiar scene this Christmas.

straight to the race.

Each player's performance across the trials and tribulations of the course is timed and a league table of all the results for each of the tracks is stored to disk, bringing in a high level of long-term competitiveness to add to the challenge of the varied tracks.

The tracks can encompass a number of different surfaces and some outrageous hazards, the like of which have never been seen before in any sane man's home. There are corkscrews, which are more than a match for any so-called professionals out there; loop the loops, which are worse than anything *Hard Drivin'* could throw at you; and something which fans of The Italian Job may well remember – pipes! These novel hazards can be one of two types, half pipes which are there purely for fun, or the full pipes which force you to go off the track which is blocked off with "Game Over" type concrete. All of these hazards are constructed from the industry-standard perforated steel effect, vector graphics, but unlike many other games I could mention they are frighteningly accurate and don't break up when they overlap.

Controls are very simple to master, even joystick steering is easy enough to use – a rare quality in such a game – which means that the player can get straight onto mastering the tracks and enjoying the game instead of spending hours getting used to swaying from side to side as you try to correct an endless swerve across the track. As with the *Test Drive* games, a blue dot on the steering wheel shows the degree of turn being used. The cars also behave in similar ways to their real-life counterparts, realistic powerdrifts, some vehicles "flying" better than others, and so-on.

Also included is a comprehensive track editor containing a wide range of pieces that will make that friend of yours who had the huge Scalectrix set very envious indeed.

Because there is such flexibility in the graphics system and its editor, surprise elements can be included, like a couple of chicane blocks just over the brow of a hill. This is where the game comes into its own, the easy handling of the car makes it ideal for creating more and more testing tracks. All these masterpieces can be saved to disk for use at a later date as can the replays of your finest moments on and, erm, off the track.

Because the graphics are polygon based, it is possible for the replays to be shown at a variety of angles.

GRAPHICS **89%**
✓ Well defined cars that make it clear what the vehicles are.
✓ Still some good backgrounds despite the fast speed of the gameplay.

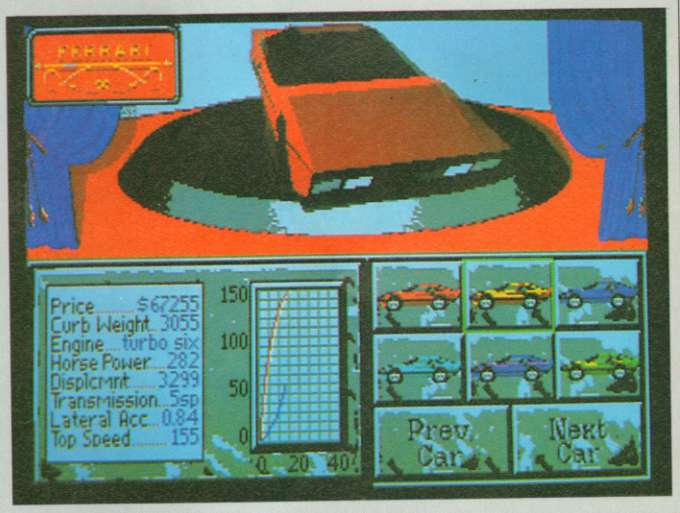
SOUND **74%**
✗ Too few effects.
✓ It does screech very nicely in all the right places.

PLAYABILITY **92%**
✓ This is the most controllable car I've come across.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

IBM PC

91%



Cor, look at that gleaming... polygon. But stop admiring the cars, get on and choose one.

There are basically two types: you can either use the on-course cameras which follow the car around the track Murray Walker style, or you can pause the game and concentrate on your car, zooming in and out, rotating around it, etc.

There are two things which take this game above many of the other games in this ever-growing genre. The playability, which allows anyone to get straight in and start driving, meaning they become better drivers instead of better joystick controllers, and the huge range of options available for creation of even more dastardly tracks than those which come with the game.

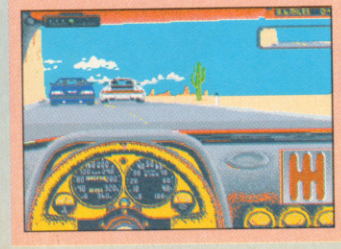
This could be a surprise hit this Christmas, and it's definitely the best and most comprehensive stunt car game this yuletide.

The main menu opens up the range of decisions available to you.

THE FIRST AND LAST

The programming team behind *4-D Sports Driving* are probably the best known 16-bit vehichle sim designers around. Distinctive Software Inc's (DSI) previous games not only include the terrific *Test Drive I* and *II*, but also the under-rated *The Cycles* which is one of the best Amiga track games you can get. Whilst always holding their complex graphics together, they combine them with super control methods which enhance the playability of the game. The DSI team are based in Vancouver, one of the most attractive cities in all of western Canada.

DSI's *The Duel: Test Drive II* broke new ground when it appeared over a year ago.



With *The Cycles*, DSI surprised many people by taking to the track and featuring motorbikes. The Amiga and IBM PC versions of *The Cycles* are the best biking games to date.

STREET HOCKEY

GONZO GAMES ■ SPORTS SIMULATOR

Our own street wise dude, Les Ellis, donned baseball cap, Nikes, knee pads and gross T-shirt to skate where no reviewer has skated before

The game of hockey, in its various forms, has been around for decades. In the Sixties, street hockey – inspired in the US by the violent sport of ice hockey – was rediscovered in the Sixties after the emergence of eurethane plastic for skateboard wheels. These tough wheels were soon whipped off for use on conventional roller skates, and led to every available flat space being used for this excuse for a fight on wheels. In parks and playing fields all over the country people were soon getting run over by padded monsters on skates. Which is at least one good selling point for *Street Hockey*, it keeps the violence off the streets.

The game of street hockey on which this is based is the American version of the sport. The major difference between this and its European counterpart are that the USA game has only five players while the Euro variant has six. Rules are very simple – there are none. No refs, no linesmen and no annoying replay officials who always overturn the decision.

This game is mad. Basically, you just have to get the ball in your opponent's goal. Whatever fights, or other physical prevention, that happens along the way is irrelevant, however getting into brawls is not recommended as it wastes valuable time.

The game is split into two sections, practice and murderous matchplay mode.

Control is indicated by a star-spangled arrow which points at the person you have chosen to control. Control can either respond by giving you the nearest player to the ball, or by you manually choosing any of the five players on the pitch.

The matchplay mode is where the real action starts. The main part of the game takes your team around 16 different parks in New York, from here the lads can qualify for the main play-offs in Central Park.

Each park contains its own league set-up. After conquering all in your league, with your position saved to disk, you can progress to the next park. However, it's not just a case of the lads jumping in a Trailways and journeying across town. Oh no, these boys have to contend with the New York traffic, yellow cabs, police cars, etc. One hit from a vehicle while any of the lads are crossing the road and they'll be affected for the next match (not surprisingly). If you arrive early at the next venue, you'll be awarded extra points for your prompt arrival (players arriving in an ambulance don't count!).

If you have a null modem cable (a pretty simple serial cable) and two Amigas or Atari STs, or even one of each, you can link them up and play a neat two-player head-to-head game. As with the normal game, the action is viewed from behind the player under control.

Before play commences you get to choose your team's formation. There is a selection of eight to pick from; some are defensive while others are all out attack.

Left: there are no rules, no refs, no linesman. This is a free-for-all. Kick, punch and smash opponents to the ground. Just remember to score occasionally. Below: your aim is to move from street to street and compete in as many matches as possible.

It started with *Wipe Out*, now Gonzo continue the wacky sports tie-ins with *Street Hockey*. Below: skating straight at a brick wall has a stunning effect (literally).

An Atari ST version (£24.99) should be out around now – little change from the Amiga version is anticipated.

PREVIEW

GRAPHICS **79%**
✓ Wide range of obstacles on the road section.
✓ Good perspective for the match action.

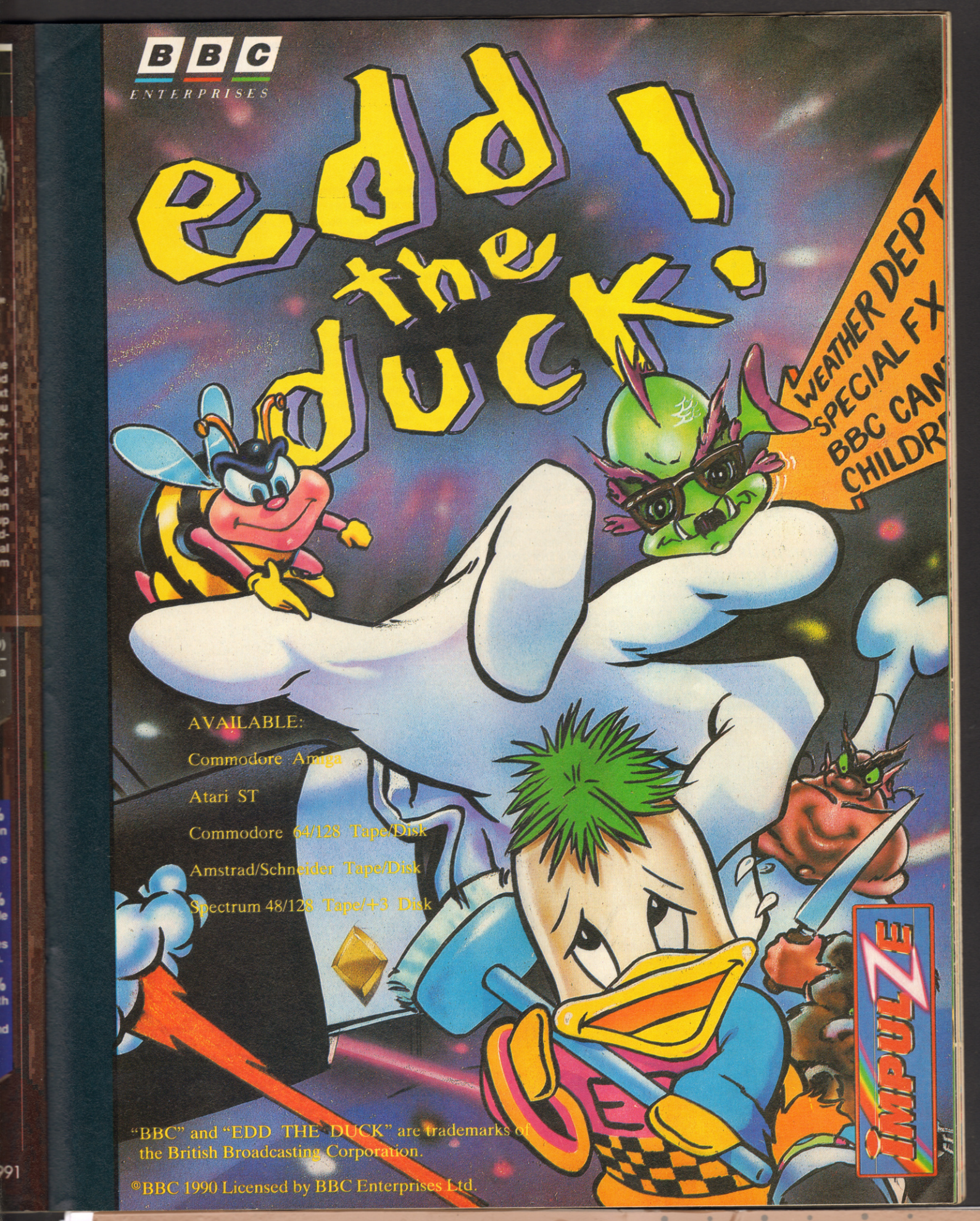
SOUND **66%**
✗ Poor sound support, with little happening.
✓ Realistic roller skate noises as you swoop around the pitch.

PLAYABILITY **71%**
✗ Only mildly addictive, with little match content.
✓ The free-for-all, smashing and bashing is great fun.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

AMIGA

72%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RAVE

NINJA REMIX

SYSTEM 3 ■ BEAT-'EM-UP ADVENTURE

After brushing up on Lee Van Cleef films, Julian Boardman pulls on his black karate slippers and steps into action

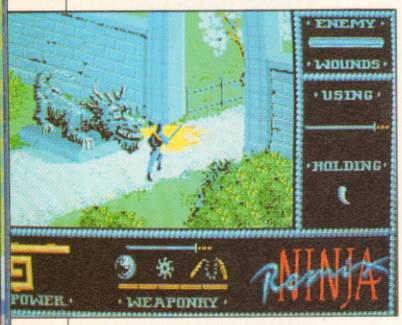
When System 3 decided to break ties with Activision, they still owed a certain amount of work. Among the games owed was a sequel game to the highly-successful *Last Ninja*. But in a hurry to go their own way, System 3 signed over the production rights to Activision, allowing them to do the programming.

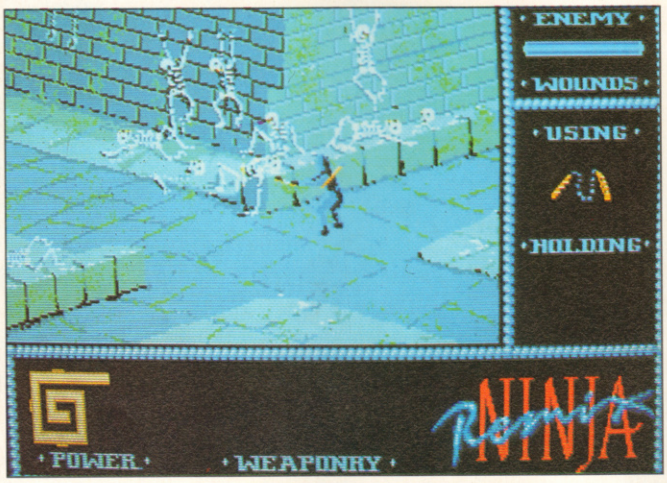
The resulting product left System 3 disappointed with Activision's game, and angry because what they saw as an inferior product was being put out under their name. The only thing left to do was to produce their own version of *Last Ninja 2*, a totally new version, to try and redress the balance. *Ninja Remix* is that new version.

Someone has killed your brother, and being a man of principles, you decide that you must avenge the death of such a close loved one. Through prayer, you find out that he was killed on the island of Lin Fen, and you decide to travel there to confront the evil man that did such a terrible deed to your brother (yawn). You face six huge levels of hazards as you fight your way through the wilderness, make your way to the palace, gain access to the dungeons, and track down the evil high priest who sacrificed your brother.

As with the previous *Ninja* games, the puzzle-oriented beat-'em-up action takes place within a 3-D isometric, flip-screen environment. As you wend your way through the very pretty land, beating up all the guards that you can see, you will find certain objects scattered around the landscape; some of them will be weapons, which can be used, or miscellaneous objects, that can be held. During the course of your trek you will come across certain obstacles, which can only be overcome if combinations of the objects and weapons are used and held.

Because of the nature of the map, it is possible to take the wrong route and end up at an obstacle before it is possible to get past it. This may mean returning to a previous area of the map, and could involve traversing a dangerous swamp or river – all is not easy for the avenging ninja. Should the player get stuck at a particular puzzle/obstacle, he or she should seek guidance from one of the shrines to Buddha. Kneeling before the statue in prayer will encourage Buddha to reveal the object that has yet to be collected, usually the object that must be used on the problem in question. These Buddhas, however, are few and far between, maybe one or two in a level, and only in the earlier levels do they





Our hero, with more weaponry than you could shake a nunchuka at, tries to get past the pre-Listerine dragon.

FAMOUS REMIXES OF OUR TIME

- ★ **Ronald Reagan's testimony in the Irangate trial.**
- ★ **Shep Pettibone's remixes of every single track on Madonna's Immaculate Collection greatest hits album.**
- ★ **The Cure's new album of dance mixes of their singles, Mixed Up.**
- ★ **DNA's version of Suzanne Vega's Tom's Diner.**
- ★ **Andy Weatherall, responsible for the chart friendly remixes of Happy Monday's singles.**

GRAPHICS **93%**

✗ The large status box lets down the effect of the screen as a whole.

✓ Remarkably good backdrops, and an excellent range of sprites.

SOUND **85%**

✗ A limited range of sound effects.

✓ Typical Japanese tune that reflects the action in the game.

PLAYABILITY **91%**

✓ Very easy to use control system that makes the game simple to play.

✓ Huge amount of depth. Will keep you hooked for months.

£24.99 ▼ 1/91

ATARI ST

92%

appear at all.

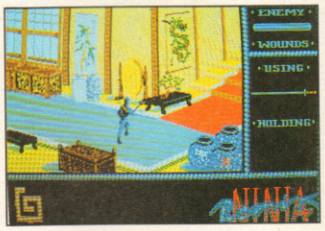
The controls have been massively improved on *Last Ninja 2*, it is possible to move eight directions no matter which way you are facing. Waggling the joystick through 360 degrees rotates the direction, pulling or pushing moves the player. This is much better than the rotate and move technique employed in the previous games, and means it is possible to back out of or move sideways from a tricky situation.

When you do enter a tricky situation, the fight controls become second nature. Moving the joystick around in conjunction with the fire button not only carries out certain moves, but also picks different weapons. Although fighting is nice and simple, the enemies

Only in such fine surroundings could two men be seen to waltz.

themselves are not always a complete walkover. The quicker you get to them, the less chance they have to build up their energy and they are consequently easier to hit.

As in all the other versions, Hugh Riley has created some of the most beautiful graphics ever seen. The colours of the backgrounds capture the atmosphere of each of the scenarios they represent: a typical Japanese wilderness, with apple blossom and the like; the palace gardens, with the fountains and the bonsai trees; the dungeons, with their skeletons and dripping blood; and the sumptuous interior of the palace itself. It is just a shame that it will take a very good player a long time to get to see all the hard work that has gone into the backgrounds.



Our hero tries to find the Ministry of Silly Walks inside the palace.

Thankfully there is a save game facility, making it possible to gradually progress through the game without having to restart from the beginning. There's no doubt that *Remix* is as fun as and definitely more playable than its predecessors. However, the high level of the puzzles and the occasionally disjointed landscape make this a very hard cookie to crack. It will take a long time and a hell of a lot of determination to complete this huge game.

The Amiga graphics will, surprisingly, not have any changes made to them, but the sound will be improved to take up the full capabilities of the Amiga. The 8-bit consoles – GX4000, C64GS and NES – are also about to enjoy their own version of *Last Ninja 2*. Watch this space.

PREVIEW

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

ACTIVISION ■ 3-D ARCADE PUZZLE

After years of waiting, 16-bit owners can now have their own version of the arcade milestone *Marble Madness* – or the nearest thing to it. *Spindizzy Worlds* is Activision's upgrade to their old 8-bit game *Spindizzy*.

You play Gerald, a small spinning top. An unusual hero, but

not surprising when you consider Gerald lives in the 21st century. Your job is much like that of fellow futuristic hero James T Kirk in that you must travel to many worlds, exploring them and gathering data, in the form of gems, for the scientists back on Earth.

There are basically two galaxies to explore – one easy, one very difficult. Each galaxy is made up of a cluster of planets. On completion of one planet you are automatically transported to

the next. The save option ensures you aren't retreading old ground each time you commence a mission.

The landscape of the planets is made up of slopes and flats, with different areas having their own type of gravity – sometimes normal, sometimes definitely not. Landscapes are joined together by narrow paths and precarious platforms. To reach some areas of the planet's surface you have to solve puzzles and initiate certain switches. If you get stuck on one particular level, the game will give you clues as to what item you should use to get to what switches etc.

On later levels the complexity of the puzzles you have to solve increases; lifts are introduced to reach higher platforms and switches become impossible to touch without first going through a series of perilous platforms and treacherous trails. The difficulty is increased when you consider that all these death-defying stunts are carried out against the clock, inevitably making you go faster and commit too many near misses which eventually turn into bad crashes. But, hey, life as a spinning top ain't easy – especially at Christmas time.

GRAPHICS **70%**

✗ Little variation in pick-ups and obstacles.

✓ Small and intricate objects, combining lots of colour in the foreground.

SOUND **65%**

✗ Poor and sparse spot effects during play.

✓ Catchy title tune.

PLAYABILITY **72%**

✗ Not enough content for longterm addiction but...

✓ ...the first week will be spent engrossed in the game, exploring the levels.

£24.99 ▼ OUT NOW

ATARI ST

70%

A straight copy of the Amiga version with nothing taken away, but nothing added. Price is the same, £24.99, and is already on the shelves.

PREVIEW

ARNOLD PALMER TOURNAMENT GOLF

SEGA ■ SPORTS SIMULATION

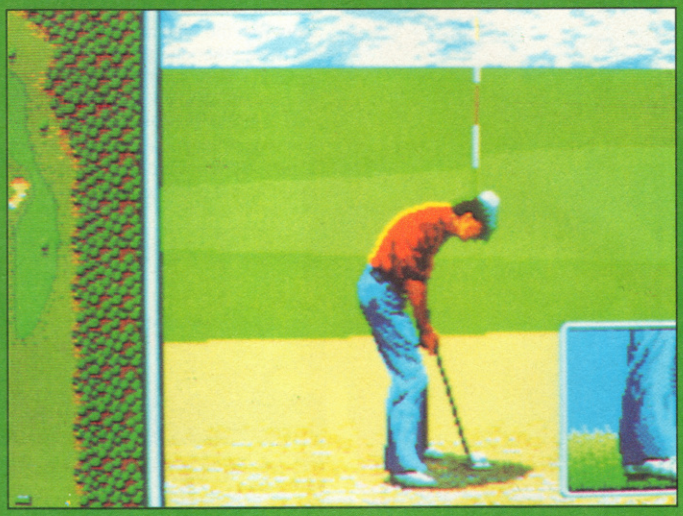
Les Ellis dresses up in white shoes, chequered trousers and a pink jumper (nothing new for this party animal)

Admittedly, the prospect of reviewing a golf game didn't exactly set my trousers on fire, but it was for a good cause so who was I to argue. Not having played a golfing game since *Leaderboard* on the C64, I approached the Mega Driver with an open mind – after all Arnold Palmer looked a bit of a jolly chap, so it might be a laugh after all.

Supposedly, the eponymous Arnold Palmer has amassed a small fortune knocking little white balls around someone else's back lawn. But he can't have that much dosh if he's lent his name to this game to get a few extra quid in. (Then again, butlers and maids are quite costly nowadays.)

As the title would suggest, play takes place within a tournament environment, matchplay, on you own or against a fellow human. You can also practise any of the holes, honing your skills to judge the power, height/punch and all-important wind factor.

In the tournament option you have received an invitation to join 15 of the other top golfers and compete in the World Pro Golf Tour. The competition is held over 12 rounds and there are real (almost) cash prizes up for grabs. The winner will take away £100,000 down to £3,000 for 16th place.



Oh, no! You're in the sand and your opponent is miles ahead. Time to press that Reset button.

Total prize money comes to £350,000 so there's plenty to play for. Before you embark on your tour around the top golf courses of the world, you must decide which clubs you can take with you. For the unfamiliar, there's a preset bag of clubs that should suffice for most courses.

As you go onto the first tee, you are joined by a delectable young lady in a short skirt. After a few bits of advice she reveals to you that she's only your caddy and asks if "that's a one wood in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?"

After assessing the hole before you, taking into account the distance to the green and the wind

factor (indicated by a weather vane), you must set yourself for your drive. The lie of the ball is displayed, and then a picture of your feet, ensuring you get the correct stance for driving etc. From here on it's just a case of choosing the correct club and hitting the little blighter. There are two stages to the swing: the power and where you wish to hit the ball. Letting the little marker travel to the top of meter will hit the ball with all your strength, while letting the other marker drop to the bottom of its meter will hit the ball at its base – thus causing a terrific amount of backspin.

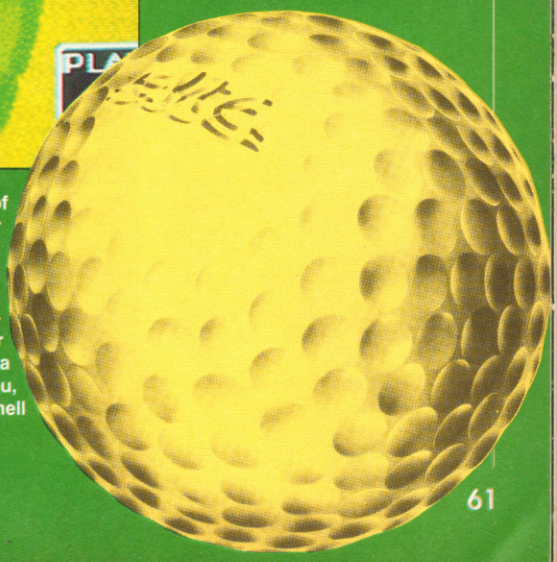
Obviously, a system of this type – as seen a hundred times before in every golfing game – is not that easy to pick up. But Arnold Palmer's little system is more accessible than others, even allowing you to let the meter go and start again.

This sequence continues until you get the ball to the green – therefore it could continue for some time! When the ball finally gets onto the illusive green, the action switches from a behind the player's back view to a bird's eye view. Here you have little to take into account but the slopes on the green and the power you wish to use. In practice it takes longer to enact than it does to explain, with players often hitting the ball from one side of the green to the other.

Sporting games, like *John Madden American Football* for example, are usually more action-packed than this. But believe me, when in two player mode you'll have more than your fair share of action off the screen as well as on it. The graphics are definitely the best I've ever seen in a golf game and the implementation of the control meters is one of the easiest I've ever used. The whole game is slickly designed and beautifully executed. Arnold Palmer may sound like a boring old fart to you, but he's got one hell of a game to play.

(Above) Lean over and let the delectable caddy whisper sweet nothings into your ear. She'll also tell you how far away you are from the green and hand you your club.

(Left) Play switches to a bird's eye view for putts. Hit the ball with care or you'll spend all day trying to get it in the hole.



GRAPHICS **88%**
✓ You're not going to get much better than this.
✓ Superb animation of the golfer's swing, with some great trees and water.

SOUND **80%**
✓ Five pleasant tunes that can accessed individually from within a match.
✓ Few effects but well executed – the applause is great!

PLAYABILITY **89%**
✓ It's dead easy to get into (I had no instructions!).
✓ Loads of courses and a two-player option mean you'll be playing this for months.

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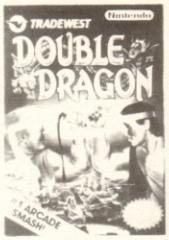

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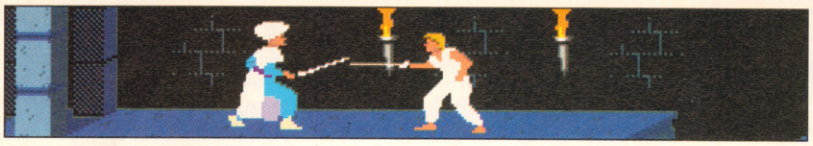

RAVE

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You know, if I had a daughter I would forbid her from ever marrying a Grand Vizier. Trouble, that's all they are. With their beady eyes and long flowing, black moustaches and dramatic gestures – can't trust the blighters. Neither should the Sultan. Off he pops to crush the barbarians and, wouldn't you know it, the Grand Vizier seizes the throne. You could see it coming couldn't you? He's also seized the Sultan's daughter (as a prelude to tying her to some railway tracks, no doubt). Now the Sultan's daughter has one hour (48 hours, boss, just give me 48 hours) to agree to marry the Sultan or she will be flung into prison with her Errol Flynn lookalike lover. Tragic, ain't it?

HEROIC GESTURES

★ You can cross a bed of spikes by taking careful steps.

★ A two storey drop will hurt but a three storey drop will kill you.

★ Test for loose floor sections by jumping up and down.

Now, this lover chappie. He is underground and swordless with a dungeon to escape from, a palace to infiltrate, a heavily guarded tower to conquer – and an hour to do it in. Do you get to play the Grand Vizier? No, you get to play the poor old lover, as if you didn't know already.

You have oodles of chambers, ledges and hallways to explore, portcullises to lift, pits to leap, turbaned swordsmen to kill all in one hour real time.

Prince of Persia is the baby of Jordan Mechner the young author of *Karateka*? The maze rooms are extremely well constructed giving players plenty to explore and plenty of apparent dead-ends to get themselves out of.

The highlight of the game has got to be the animation, though. Working from "hundreds of movie clips" and the digitised poses of three live models, Mechner has crafted the smoothest animation ever seen in a game of this type.

The plucky chap in *Prince of Persia* can execute a number of different moves. Apart from walking and running he can take careful steps in case of a weak floor area, jump up, jump forward or jump even further by using a running jump. He can climb up onto a ledge or hang from a ledge to make long drops easier on the old legs. He can also pick things up, duck and climb down from ledges. When the action occurs, swords at the ready, your man can strike, advance, retreat, block an opponent's strike and stop fighting all together.

Weee... I just hope you've packed your parachute!

In all of these actions he looks like a real person. The Grand Vizier and the young princess, who are seen in animated sequences throughout the game, turn and strut, cry, shake fists, make dramatic gestures. Again, while looking like real people. *Prince of Persia* reeks of attention to detail and a hell of a lot of effort.

There is a nifty option in the game to give you practise at sword fighting or whatever. Just hit the right key combination and you advance a level. This will throw you into some early action and enable you to hone your skills. Don't think you can skip all the levels though. In addition, the time is reduced to 15 minutes which makes the game impossible to win.

Although these screens don't convey it, *Prince of Persia* contains some superb animation – just like *Karateka*, the programmer's previous game.

An Atari ST version is lined up for release "sometime" next year. The price, however, is more exact, that will be £24.99. Don't expect too many changes from the Amiga version.

PREVIEW

GRAPHICS 93%
✓ A great range of forced 3-D backdrops, all beautifully detailed.
✓ Some of the greatest animation you are likely to see for a long while.

SOUND 89%
✓ A good range of effects adding atmosphere and intrigue.
✓ Titles tune and other ditties add great feel to the game.

PLAYABILITY 91%
✓ Less disk access on 1Mb machines.
✓ Between the sword fighting there is great depth to the game.

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AMIGA
92%

GRAPHICS 94%
✓ Visually almost identical to the Amiga version.
✓ Some great pictures of the Grand Visier getting up to his tricks.

SOUND 78%
✓ Good support for the AdLib.
✓ A fun environment is created by the natty little ditties.

PLAYABILITY 91%
✓ A totally absorbing game which is great fun.
✓ One of the best platform games on the IBM PC.

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GOLDEN AXE

Confusing Death Adder with Black Adder, Les Ellis pulled on some black tights and pranced around the office (nothing out of the ordinary there)

The Sega consoles have already had versions of *Golden Axe*, so it was about time Virgin and Sega got together to bring us the computer version.

Everyone should know the story by now. Death Adder and his band of not-so-merry men have wreaked havoc over your once-proud land, half the population has been killed and the king and princess have been captured and put in chains. Death Adder also has in his possession the legendary golden axe from which he draws immense power.

Three characters appear on the scene to avenge the goings-on, and put Death Adder six foot under. Each character has their own special moves and excels in at least one area of combat. The action scrolls from right to left with new Death Adder minions encountered regularly. Enemies on the first couple of levels are fairly easy to chop down, but later levels require knowledge of the opponents' techniques and their weak points.

Magic potions can also be used to defeat the tough guys, with powers ranging from columns of fire to rupturing thunder. At the end of each level, you get to increase your magic and energy levels by kicking a dwarf around the screen.

After smashing and bashing through six levels of Death Adder minions, you finally confront the big man himself. Make sure you have enough potions left for this colossal meeting, because Death Adder is one mean mother and it takes more than a few harsh words to kill him.

First pick your character: Ax-Battler, the courageous barbarian with immense strength and broadsword; Tyris-Flare, a young Amazonian lady with lethal magic and lightning fast swordplay; Gilius-Thunderhead, a dwarf whose clever bag of tricks and large chopper can defeat even the largest of foes.

Time for revenge, but first you must go to the Turtle village and get some advice from Donatello and Raphael. Immediately above: kick the little blue bugger for some extra magic. On later levels he will be joined by a food-giving friend whose wares will boost your energy bar.

The Atari ST version should look and sound similar to the Amiga, therefore it's just as well the price is the same, £24.99.

PREVIEW

GRAPHICS **81%**
✗ Slow scrolling and animation prevent frenetic gameplay.
✓ Great big sprites, with plenty of variation.

SOUND **86%**
✓ Some nice effects, including slicing swords and fire-breathing.
✓ A pleasant soundtrack plays along with the action.

PLAYABILITY **76%**
✗ Too slow for any longterm addiction.
✓ The initial encounters with the wide range of monsters are exciting.

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AMIGA
82%

Gold dust was used by ancient Egyptians as a soup spice.

REAL HATRED IS TIMELESS

LAST NINJA 3

Ninja 3 is here and ready to explode onto your screen with the most glorious display of graphics and animated fight sequences ever seen in this type of game.

With a massive introduction sequence, incredibly detailed '3D' background graphics and a more than generous helping of all-out action, Ninja 3 displays a degree of excellence never before experienced by even the most seasoned Ninja fan. Ninja 3 – A game of epic proportions.

Feel the realism, allow yourself to witness the magical world of Ninjitsu, spiritualism, experience the mystical atmosphere of the Tibetan Temples. Remember, always remain in control of your stealth and cunning as you do battle once again with the most treacherous purveyor of evil, Kunitoki.

Actual C64 Screens

Regarded as a licence within itself, the highly acclaimed Last Ninja series reaches an unequalled pinnacle of excellence with the arrival of Ninja 3. Seldom has a series of games won as many awards world wide as The Last Ninja. NEVER HAS SUCH A SERIES OF GAMES JUST GOT BETTER AND BETTER . . .

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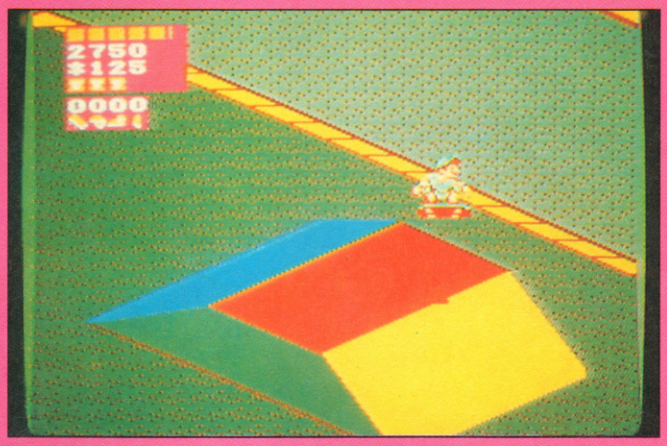
SYSTEM 3

720°

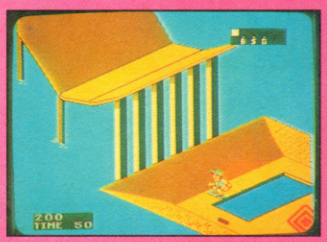
MINDSCAPE ■ ARCADE SPORTS



Yeah, dude, get some air as you go ballistic in the town centre.

Who else could it be? Julian "The Skate" Boardman does the business...

I remember skateboarding from a while back. Our local council, a bunch of caring Liverpudlian socialists, built one of those steel boardparks in the estate just up the road. Some small ramps for the beginners, going right through the range to the large stunt ramps that always used to put the fear of God into me. The point being that after one summer they were left derelict, an inanimate testament to the fickle nature of youth and their crazes – pay heed Donatello and Stone Roses!



You make it safely to the bottom but the time was a bit slow and you only get a bronze medal.

This time around, though, skateboarding seems to have been a little more long lived, it is now a fully fledged sport – almost – and it can only be a matter of time before it is an official Olympic event – perhaps. Sarcasm aside, the fact that *720°* hit the arcades in 1986 is a suggestion that maybe the four-wheeled menaces of every shopping mall in every western nation are here to stay. In every other civilisation, teenagers cause civil uprising, even revolution, what do we get? Skateboarders! Where's the subversion in that?

Another interesting phenomenon is the skatespeak which is clearly evident on the packaging of *720°*. This could be the first sign of the end of civilisation as we know it.

"Yo, skateheads!" it begins, inviting you to take part in four jammin' (very good) levels – Downhill, Slalom, Jump and Ramp. Each part of the game demands different skills of the poor, deluded skateheads (people who skate) who venture into the Californian skatepark to show off their talents.

Three of the skills are fairly self-explanatory, each of Downhill, Slalom and Jump are against the clock with a gold, silver, bronze or nothing being awarded depending on the time. Indeed, the Jump section awards bonus points for the more rad (excellent) the jumps are on the way down. All of these disciplines give bonus points for performing totally unnecessary spins aiming for the utterly mondo (oh, sorry, wrong craze), the 720°, but some minor spins will suffice. As long as you end with your wheels travelling the same way you won't end up on your ass.

The Ramp is where the real skateheads come into their own. The ramp is a U-shaped construction with two platforms at the extreme high points. This, unless you are most bogus (crap), this gives the best opportunity to perform the most rad stunts, handstands, flying spins and the like, all of which are probably very easy unless you are a complete human being like myself, and all of which will make your friends gag (envious). If you do well in any of the four parks you will receive a cash bonus, more than generous if you ask me.

The four skateparks are in disparate corners of a hazardous set of streets, all of which are scattered with ramps and so on that can be used to add bonus points. There are also totally brain-dead body builders who insist on pumping iron in the middle of the road, and present the danger of knocking you off your board and onto your ass costing you invaluable time.

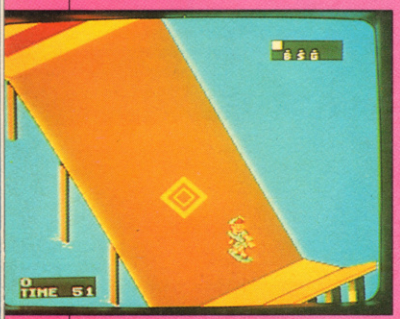
You see, if you don't get to the four events before the time runs out you go into Skate or Die mode and get chased by a swarm of killer bees, curtailing your attempts to amass a load of bonus points.

Also around these streets are various equipment shops. Here you can buy intense (more effective) kit such as helmets, pads and boards to improve your performance in the park, but all this has to be done within the time.

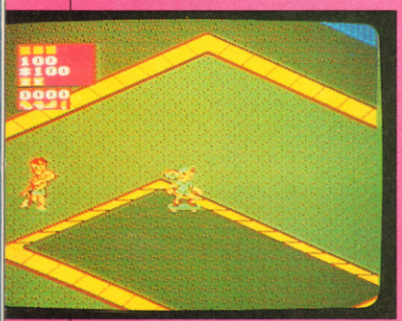
Once the four events have been completed it is on to the next set of four more difficult events, and all this carries on until your three lives are taken by those well known Californian killer bees.

Despite my prejudices, I'm sure that *720°* could be very enjoyable to all those skateheads out there, it feels easy enough to control the little skater, and the incentive is there to continue playing and try to beat the events, amassing huge amounts of points and very nice equipment. In fact, I'm sure it could be quite addictive, if you were a real skateboarder.

In all honesty, I actually quite enjoyed myself. Yo, skateheads!



Weee... Zooming down the jump park and wondering which way to turn next.



Avoid the body builders. Their twists and turns will give you bumps and burns.

GRAPHICS **83%**
✓ Great colour and many near 16-bit quality backgrounds.
✓ Some amusing touches like the body builder provide depth.

SOUND **73%**
✗ The in-game effects are not up to scratch.
✓ Very rad intro tune.

PLAYABILITY **85%**
✓ Intense!
✓ Not bogus!

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NES

64%

Julian goes aerial when the betties hit town.

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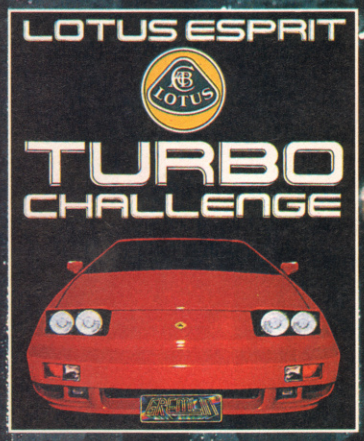

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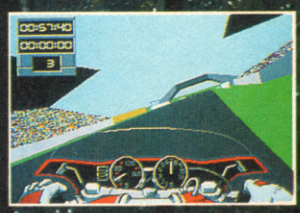

"3 D speed truly impressive ... superb fast polygon graphics ... Realistic Races" ACE Jim Douglas.

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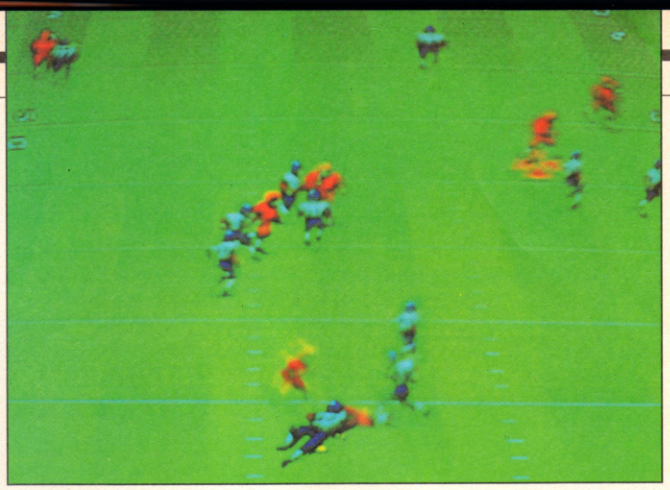
RAZE

JOHN MADDEN AMERICAN FOOTBALL

ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ SPORTS SIM

"Fridge" Boardman runs a mile, so Les "Hatstand" Ellis stretches out to tackle this immense footy sim



Whether you're in the mud of Miami or the snow of Buffalo, the players move and react as they should.

Thanks to Channel Four, American football is now more popular than it has ever been. It has progressed from a strange minority sport to one of the more popular sporting pastimes of the nation. British American football teams (if that makes any sense) now have their own league and even take on their American counterparts (and usually get soundly thrashed!). You've probably heard the eponymous John Madden, as the ex-player/coach he is now employed as an American commentator.

Many computer games have tried to emulate the thrills and spills, action and excitement but none have come quite as close as this console-based game from Electronic Arts.

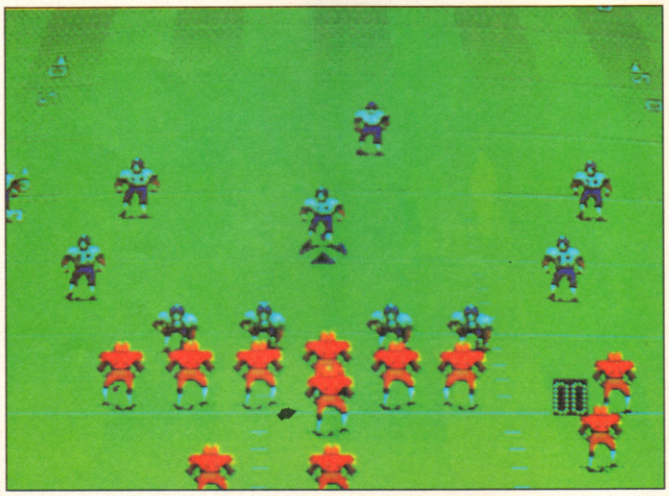
In *John Madden American Football* you get to play the coach, quarterback, receivers and runners all in one as you plan the plays and execute them, hopefully piercing your opponent's defense wide open.

From the opening selection screen you can choose which team you want to play and who your opponents are. The teams can be either computer or player controlled, and the match played at any of the venues in the National Football League (NFL). The game you play can either be part of the playoffs, culminating with the Super Bowl, or a straight head-to-head battle. For ease of play, the length of the quarters can be set at either five or 15 minutes realtime.

At the start of the game proper you are presented with an introductory picture of the ground and the crowd going wild with anticipation. The the ref then walks on and spots the ball – all very slick. From here the whistle goes and the kicker starts the match by walloping the ball into his opponent's half. The action is viewed from a commentary box at one end of the ground. With the players swapping sides at the end of each quarter, no team has the advantage of being at the bottom of the screen, as in tennis games.

If you are receiving the kick you immediately switch to offense. Your man lights up with a pointer beneath his feet and you must run with the ball as far as possible without dropping it. While running you can avoid defensive tacklers by either diving to the ground (under their tackle), spinning away, or wriggling your way out of a tackle if they've got their hands on you. Once you've got the ball it isn't too long before three or four players come stomping towards you and put your face in the dirt (or astro-turf).

Offensive and defensive plays are chosen from selection panels at the top of the screen. Each panel contains three plays, corresponding to the three joypad buttons, which can be changed by moving left or right. This options panel is definitely one of the game's greatest assets. Using it is very simple, and not having to move cursors around means your opponent doesn't know what's going on. In fact, you can even call a coded



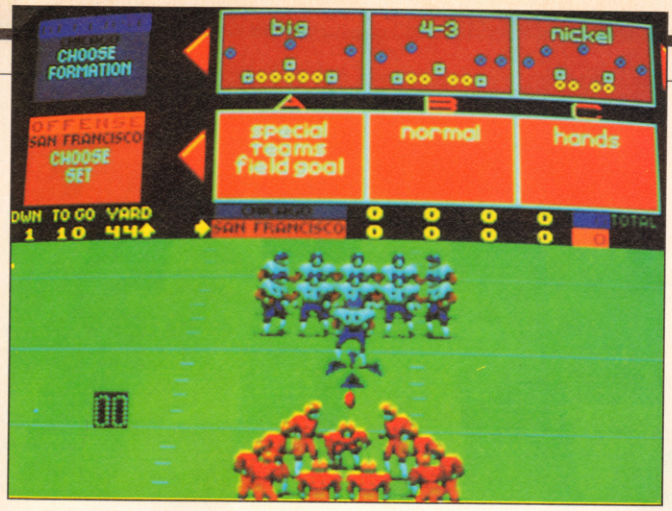
"Hut, hut, hut. 54, 32, 28." You can actually hear the quarterback call out the snap to his players.

GRAPHICS **95%**
✓ The forced 3-D perspective works well and scrolls beautifully.
✓ Individual figures – players and refs – are very detailed and superbly animated.

SOUND **93%**
✓ Stunning title music by ex-patriot Rob Hubbard.
✓ Great in-game speech and bone-crunching effects.

PLAYABILITY **94%**
✓ In one-player mode there's enough variety and difficulty to keep you going for ages.
✓ In two-player mode you better be sure you know how to use the plays better than your "friend".

£39.99 ▼ OUT NOW
MEGA DRIVE
94%



All team statistics are stored and reported at half-time by the eponymous "Jolly" John Madden.

move audibly from the line of scrimmage if you really want to screw up your oppo.

Control of defense is very simple. You choose to play one man and the computer controls the rest of your team. Your defensive player can go through all the moves, running, diving, jumping etc, and must hold his own if your team is to succeed.

Offensive moves are not so easy to carry out. This isn't because of the control system, but is more due to the quality of the computer-controlled defense who marked their man, or their space, religiously. If a passing play is called, when initiated the top of the screen will display windows of the three receivers' positions for the quarterback to choose from. If a receiver isn't correctly positioned for your pass, or if he's not going to get there soon and you throw the ball, you'll either find the ball intercepted or the pass a waste of a play.

Plays, or downs as they are known, should not be treated lightly. You only have four of them to get the required ten yards. If you're a few yards from the next down, it might be worth calling a normal play on the fourth down, but mess it up and the ball will transfer to the opposition (a turnover). Usually, it's best punt the ball (or go for a field goal if you're within distance of the posts) on the fourth down, although fake moves can sometimes catch your opponent out of position.

There are basically four ways to score. The first is the touchdown (seven points), which is then followed by an extra point conversion (kicking from a preset point at the goalposts). During play you can try to kick the ball through your opponent's posts, called a field goal (three points), or, very rarely, you can tackle your opponent in their own endzone. Your opponent will still have possession of the ball (otherwise it would be a touchdown), but you will have scored a safety (two points).

During the half-time interval and after the game, big John Madden will show you the game statistics so far. Stats should be closely examined as they can reveal your opponent's style of play – passing, running, etc – and also your weak points.

John Madden American Football is successful because of two important factors. For real fans, the game is very accurate, containing all the moves you'll ever need with accurate implementation of the rules. For fans and non-fans alike, the game is very easy to pick up and play, visually attractive and aurally entertaining. A totally original game for the Mega Drive is always a pleasure to play, and when it's got this sort of depth you'll have trouble removing it from that cartridge slot.

QUICK QUIZ

No prizes, just match the teams with their nicknames.

Los Angeles
COWBOYS
New York
RAMS/RAIDERS
San Francisco
PACKERS
Houston
GIANTS
Green Bay
49ERS
Dallas
OILERS

ANSWERS

LOS ANGELES RAMS / RAIDERS
NEW YORK GIANTS
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
HUSTON OILERS
GREEN BAY PACKERS
DALLAS COWBOYS

GAUNTLET II

MINDSCAPE ■ ARCADE ACTION

Julian Boardman grabs a napkin and a knife and folk and goes in search of more food

Well folks that old nugget *Gauntlet* has reared its archaic head once more. Last month it was the original game (which gained 70%), and this month it's the sequel. This NES version contains all the familiar elements of the original. There's a choice of four characters – the warrior, wizard, valkyrie and elf – that can be used to take you through all the levels of the castle. The usual enemies are there, the ghosts of past warriors who rise from their skeletons, cavemen type thingies, and those incredibly awkward black monks who are an absolute pig to kill.

This version also has some advanced features, some of the walls can be shot through, and there are some new potions, one of which results in random teleports around the screen. Also included are some new squares that teleport you about the screen to another such square. This is not always convenient, as it sometimes sends you into the path of some other weird creature. As before, collecting the keys will open doors so that access can be gained to other areas of the level. Up to six levels can be skipped depending on which exit is chosen.

As a game, it stands up fairly well on its own. It is better than the original, so this is the version I would prefer to have in my collection. But if you're looking for any major additions warranting purchase on top of the original, I'd forget it.

Only one or two players can take part in the action on the Nintendo version of *Gauntlet*.

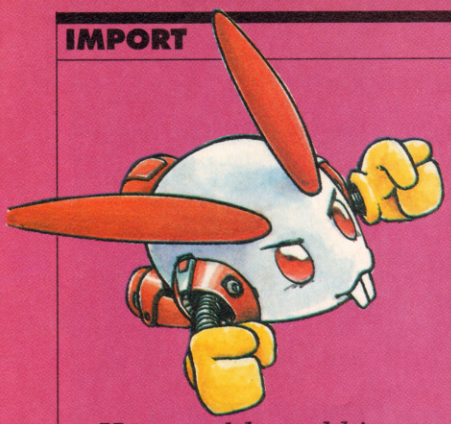
GRAPHICS **79%**
✗ The same old dull *Gauntlet* backgrounds.
✓ Fast moving sprites and loads of action.

SOUND **76%**
✗ Few great effects but...
✓ ...the squeals and shouts are quite neat.

PLAYABILITY **75%**
✗ Very repetitive gameplay.
✓ Fast and frantic as you fight the hordes of ghosts.

£19.99 ▼ OUT NOW
NES
74%

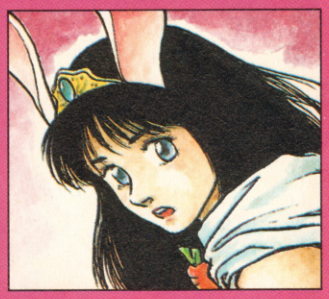
Da, dada, dada, da, da...



How could a rabbit be the star of one of the most challenging PC Engine games for years? Julian Boardman dug out his old floppy ears and asked "What's up, doc?"

RABIO LEPUS

HU-SOFT ■ HORIZONTAL SHOOT-'EM-UP

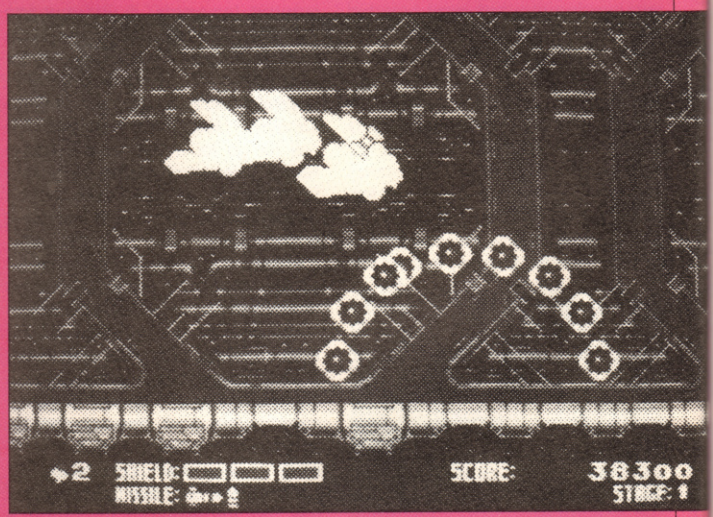


There is only one problem with all these Japanese games, you never have any idea what is going on half the time. This one is no exception. As far as I can make out, a rabbit-shaped spacecraft (just bear with me here) is on a bit of a romp through the galaxy shooting everything it sees. Quite why I'm not sure, but being a rabbit he's probably after a bonk.

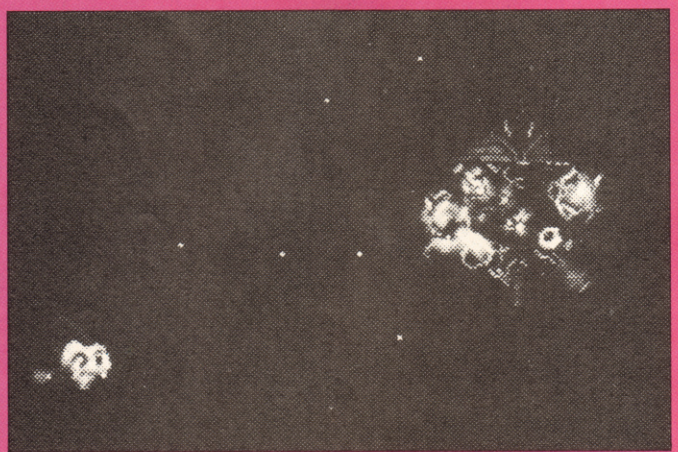
Once the initial shock of finding yourself in control of a laser-firing, boxing-gloved rabbit is over, it soon becomes clear that this game is not going to be any old walkover. It is a standard horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, but with very tough gameplay, a large amount of taxing aliens and some obscure power-ups.

The aliens behave in a very erratic manner, they never seem to fall quite into the right place for your line of fire. The static enemies take eight or nine shots to blow up, and the scenery will also knock you out.

Power-ups are revealed by shooting the barrels marked with carrots. These may reveal points, large carrots, a bow, or a psychedelic rabbit. The carrots beef up your three-shot shield, the bow increases your firing rate until you take a hit, and the psychedelic rabbit turns you into a flow of bright colours that will take out anything you touch.



It's the psychedelic bunny. Now you know what happens when you grow carrots in Bill Wyman's back garden.



This is one of the more hectic moments, and it is only the first level.

What the Japanese have tried to do is bring us a product that has far better gameplay in conjunction with bright, detailed, colourful graphics, and high energy sound effects. It works well. It is damn difficult. It is well worth the money.

More gameplay than you could shake a carrot at!

PC ENGINE 84%

IMPORT

DYNAMITE DUKE

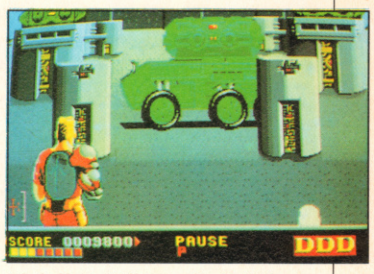
At first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking this was another game in the Taito coin-op *Operation* series. The screen scrolls from right to left and your character faces inwards, shooting people he sets his sights on. The sights move independently of the character so it will take a little time to get used to the control method. As well as blasting away at the oncoming hordes, there are various inanimate objects in the scenery – post boxes etc – that can be exploded for fun. Occasionally bonus icons will be found, and when shot will add ammo, health or turn your weapon into an automatic firing weapon for a while.

The aim is to reach the end of each stage and conquer the large mechanical monsters in the shape of helicopters, tanks, etc. Killing the machine will let you into a building, allowing you to have a fist fight with someone more your own size. Here you can punch with either hand and kick – unfortunately so can your opponent.

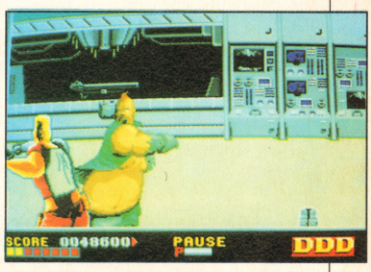
There are seven missions in all. The action starts in an airfield continues into an occupied town, treks out to the woods, trundles through a tunnel, explores the factory, blows out the laboratory and culminates in explosive action at the atomic reactor.

The graphics are nothing special and the sound doesn't impress, but the action's compulsive and will just about suffice until *Operation Wolf* appears.

£35.00 ▼ IMPORT
MEGA DRIVE
78%



It looks like *Op Wolf*; it plays like *Op Wolf*; and it'll have to do until *Op Wolf* arrives on the Mega Drive.



Put up your dukes and face the action.

FORTRESS OF FEAR

ACCLAIM ■ ARCADE ADVENTURE

The evil black magician Malkil has taken over the kingdom. The people thought all their suppression had ceased over ten years ago when Malkil's last rant ended with him being banished to another dimension, but using his undoubted powers the big black guy is back – and this time he's kidnapped the Princess Elaine (don't you just hate it when they do that?).

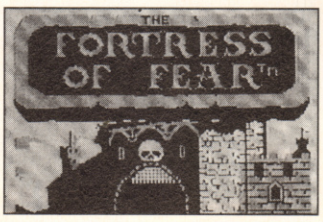
You play Kuros, hero of what is now ten Wizards & Warriors games. Your old adversary Malkil has taken refuge in the Fortress of Fear, where he is holding the plumb princess. You must journey through the treacherous woods of Zanifer to find and overcome him.

On your quest you generally move horizontally along the landscape, although some sections of the castle do involve a bit of platform climbimg. The nightmares you encounter – knights, snakes, etc – can be swiftly despatched with a quick slice from your sword.

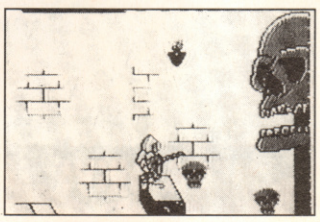
There are five chapters to complete and each chapter is made up of several levels (totalling 18 sections in total). The objectives of each level are to search for the keys to open chests, collect any gems and magic spells in the cheats or on the floor and avoid any unfriendly inhabitants of the fortress. Creatures can, of course, be avoided, but wimping out of sticky situations won't bring you much of a score.

When a game like this is up against the might of the Turtles it doesn't stand much of a chance. The graphics aren't quite in the correct proportions but the stage scenes are varied and challenging. Considering this is the first Wizards & Warriors game on the Game Boy it's impressive. But with this being the tenth in the series, I can't see the saga going on for much longer.

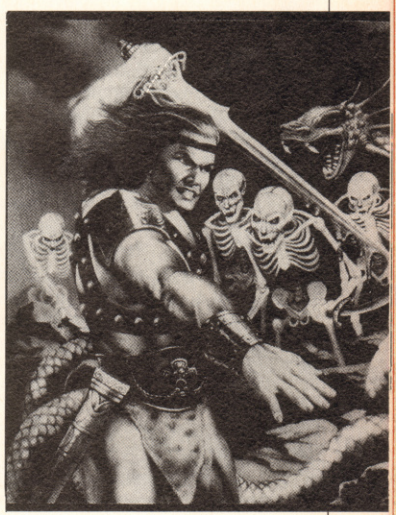
Incidentally, it's based on a design by those ex-Ultimate guys at Rare. Worth looking at just for that, I'd say.



Chop your way through the tenth game in the Wizards & Warriors series.



Watch out, it's the terrifying skull at the end of the second level.



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GAME BOY
79%

Migi ni magette kudasai.

FIRE SHARK

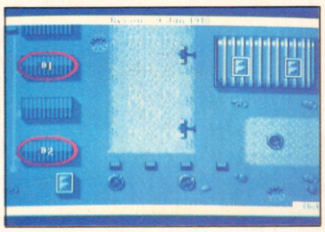
TOPLAN ■ VERTICAL SHOOT-'EM-UP

Lasers on a bi-plane, what a refreshing change. For good or for bad, Mega Drive owners seem to be suffering a glut of shoot-'em-ups, both horizontally and vertically scrolling. But when they're as good as this you can't really complain.

The basic idea of *Fire Shark!* is not exactly the most original. Your country has been invaded on a major scale, the enemy have wiped out your airforce and the land- and sea-based forces are out of commission. The only force your nation can muster to fight the invaders is a few measly old bi-planes. These antiques have been wheeled out of the museums and hastily modernised with faster engines and some more powerful weapons.

Only one pilot is qualified to fly these machines – you. After flying your crop-duster for many years, you are pretty used to its quirks and so you are selected to try and save your nation.

Once airborne you are soon under attack from all sorts of craft, some airborne, some on land and some in the sea. Your plane is fitted with a standard blaster to shoot these opponents but this can built up with the aid of power-ups released by shooting certain types of craft. There are also two other weapons available from power-ups; the wave-gun shoots out bullets which wiggle up the screen in a wave-like manner (makes sense) and the laser just frazzles any rogue units it happens to touch. Both of these weapons can also be built up to immense proportions. You also get a limited amount of smart bombs that wipe out anything the ensuing explosion touches.

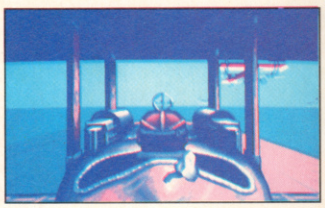


Graphical excellence and superior sonics help *Fire Shark* stand out from innumerable console shoot-'em-ups.

Putting this game above so many of the members of this gaming genre are numerous neat touches, like the killer whales swimming in the sea, the beached whale that gets pushed back in the water and the action on the runway just before you land to finish a stage.

Another great Mega Drive shoot-'em-up, but it may prove a bit too easy once you've got the top weaponry.

No Roy Scheider, no Michael Caine, but loads of sharks to be shot and boats to bomb.



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87%

IMPORT BUYS

The games mentioned in Import are not available generally in the UK, and are only purchasable from select grey importers. Also note, the games looked at here will be reviewed in full when they are officially available in Britain.

All games reviewed in Import this month came from:

■ Console Concepts, unit 18, The Village Shopping Centre, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Stafordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

JALECO ■ ARCADE PUZZLE

The great king of Blobolonia has turned his planet into a miserable place to live. Only one young blob has managed to escape the tyranny imposed on Blobolonia, and of all places he has come down to Earth. Now being a blob isn't easy down here but he has befriended a young boy who has agreed to help him return to Blobolonia and get rid of the tyrant.

There is one vital component missing from Blobolonia which would unite the people and end the troubles, vitamens.

The two must team up to find a way through the streets of New York, the sewers and eventually the landscape of Blobolonia to complete their mission. Blob isn't exactly renowned for his warrior abilities but he does have this knack of being able to change shape when fed with certain jellybeans. This skill must be utilised to the full to finish the mission.

Boy moves around the scenery closely followed by Blob, if Blob falls too far behind then just whistle and he will soon catch up. When faced with an obstacle or a puzzle, the boy must throw a certain flavour jellybean into the gaping mouth of the blob to turn him into something that will help to solve the puzzle. A gobble of some beans and the blob will turn into umbrellas, ladders, trampolines, keys, jacks, in fact just about anything to help you on your quest.

As they travel about, the pair will find the vitamens, all of which must be picked up. Forget just one vitamen and they'll be trouble.

The game is immensely fun to play, with the blob a right little chameleon when it comes to problems. The different types of limited beans make *A Boy and his Blob* a real puzzler. This is one game you won't be completing overnight, and one that'll give you weeks of endless fun.

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Feeding time for the blob as you help to rescue his many friends.

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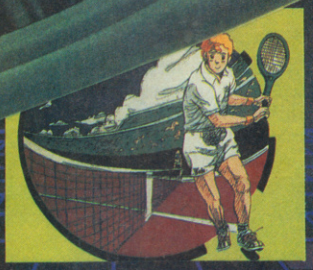

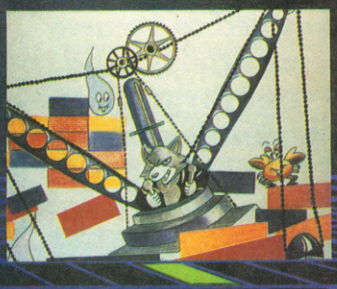

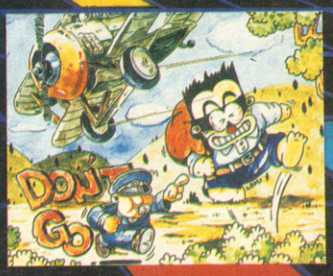

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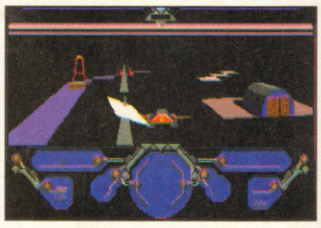
HACKS & STACKS

After minutes of excruciatingly difficult(ish) discussions with Graftgold, The Zak Man has managed to secure some utterly mad tips for all you brain-deads out there who can't play Simulcra properly! These types are just the job and come direct from the horse's mouth, the horse being programmer Andrew Braybrook. Take it away Andy, you old mad monster of magnificent munchiness.

There are many different ways and techniques to use while playing Simulcra. The tactics to choose depend on your skill level and situation. To progress through the screens it is important to assess what your priorities are at any time from the following:

1. Locate and destroy the next power generator.
2. Build up the SRV's capability.
3. Seek extra lives.
4. Kill the enemy.
5. Get a pod to update your restart position.
6. Survive.

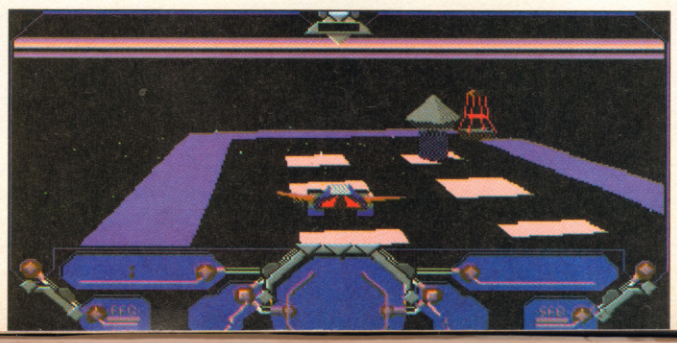


BEACHHEAD

Generally speaking, I start off by cleaning up the start area by eliminating the enemy and picking up the pods to build up my SRV. Then I hunt the power generators. On the way I will cull a few meanies and pick up the odd pod. If you leave a pod before it shrinks, it becomes dormant and you can return to pick it up later. Pick them all up till you have a TAD, then you'll know what each contains and whether or not to risk a tricky pick up. Only use the pods you need.

BLITZKRIEG

I like a fast and furious attack whether on the ground or in the air. My favourite method of finding a power generator is to storm along a power barrier at high speed from the previous barrier. Usually this will lead to the next barrier. Learn to recognize the edge barriers, those you can shut down never merge with the edge, and the edge has red pylons. It is best to fly along barriers that can be shut down as there is bound to be a generator there somewhere. If you reach an edge, turn around and go the other way. Sometimes I fly behind a degenerating barrier following the sparks, this often leads to the once blocked path and to the next area. A constant eye is needed on the barrier in case of turns towards you, just be ready to steer away rapidly.



SPECIAL

PARKED FLYING CRAFT

Try to destroy them before they take off.

THE MOTHERSHIP

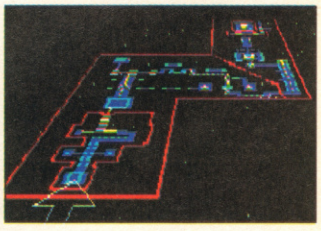
Sooner or later you will encounter this ship, it follows you generating craft and can take many hits. The best way of dealing with it is to ram it in the air; make sure that your shields are up to strength.

MONOLITHS

These black droids drain your shield energy very quickly. Approach slowly so you are just in laser range and shoot them. Remember where they are

STRONG POINTS

When a power generator has been located, I try to make a kill and pick up a pod so if I lose the craft I am restarted at that point. Then I make a few flypasts taking pot-shots at all and sundry but trying to stay out of trouble. When a suitable landing site is found, I land and systematically destroy the defences which are usually heavy



around a generator. To attack many opponents it is essential to keep moving, the worst thing to do is to stay in one spot and try to zero in your weapon before the opposition – you may beat one gun but four more will be targeting you. Drive toward the enemy as you aim. If you run out of room simply reverse, repeat this until you get your shot on.

Occasionally, especially for the last generator, I will risk a suicide head-on attack on a generator firing a missile at point blank range and flying through the debris.

RETREAT

Once shields are low, priority switches to survival. I fly back to a hull or power pod that I have left, or seek easy kills until a power

TACTICS

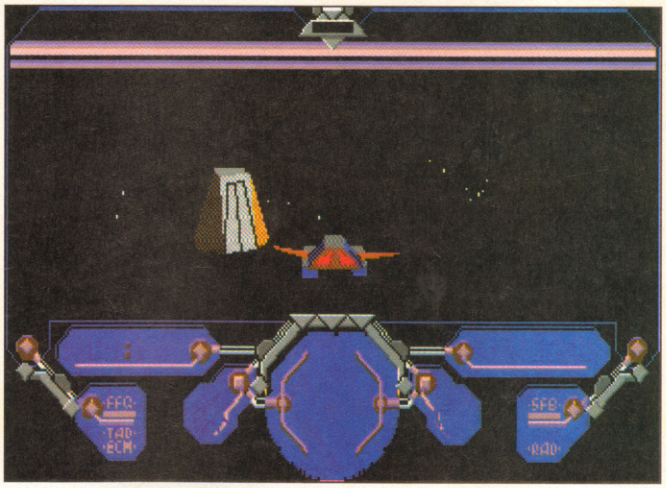
because stumbling on them is always fatal.

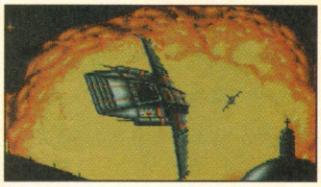
HOMING WEAPONS

Retreat as fast as possible and shoot at them. Most have a limited range and can be outrun. Use an ECM if you have one. It helps to have a "crew" to control the weapons, as steering with one hand can be tricky.

FRISBEE DROIDS

These droids fire frisbee-like homing weapons at you. Try to approach them so you can deal with one at a time and try to shoot the droid rather than the weapon. If you miss a retreat, deal with the missiles then go in for another run. Good luck!





LIVES

To get to higher levels, it is important to collect as many lives as you can on the earlier levels. When one generator is left have a scout around and pick up any lives or useful pods – there is at least one extra life on each level.

MAZES

The later levels usually require much backtracking so it is useful to leave many meanies as a supply of new parts. The maps displayed in the game do not show every power line in the distance. Explore along power lines following the barrier around the maze and you will eventually come to an exit or a generator. To get around, ignore the floor and skip across the void in the direction you wish to go, this also helps to avoid disorientation.

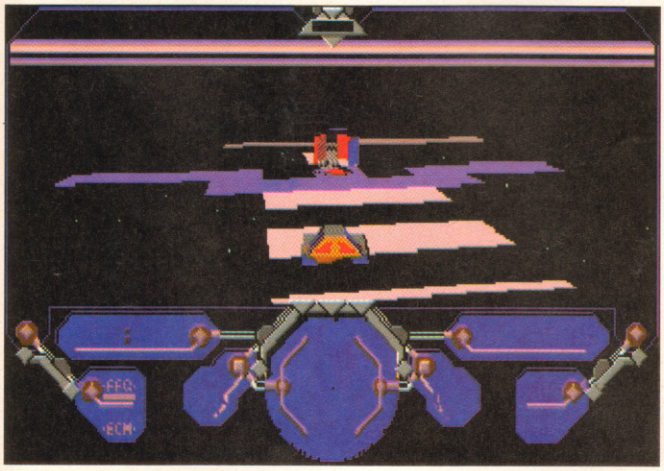
pod is given. Sometimes it pays to leave an area until you have missiles and a TAD. On the later levels you can be at a severe disadvantage without missiles as the enemy take several laser hits to kill.

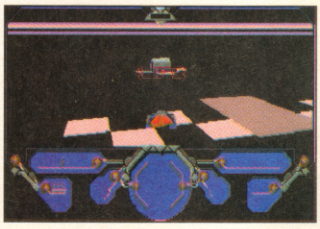
FLYING

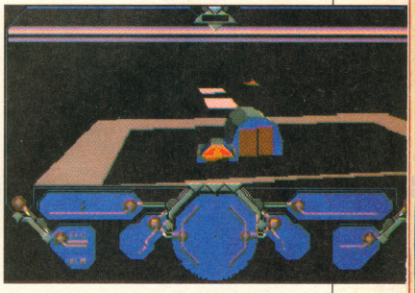
Get some flying practice in when a level is almost cleared. Practise a few emergency stops and start flying slowly at first then at top speed. It is worth getting the knack because the feeling of flying through the enemy at maximum speed picking off targets and dodging in between the towers is most exhilarating. There is always just enough time to turn or stop if you come across a dead end but you must always act quickly. Because the enemy are outclassed when you are flying, it can be far less dangerous – until it comes to the time to land and build up shield power again.

DOGFIGHTING

If you are attacked by airborne craft there are a few useful tactics. If they can out-turn you, land as quickly as possible as the turn rate of the SRV is much better. If the enemy is approaching from behind try a deceleration, and be careful to steer out of the way so it doesn't ram you – it should fly into your sights. Learn which are the dangerous aerial attackers and deal with them quickly. Try leading attackers into minefields or towers, they have no ability to steer around things.







Many thanks to Andrew Braybrook and all at Graftgold. Special thanks to Emma at MicroProse for some personal attention to dear old Doctor Zak.

SIMULCRA

Welcome, my little monsters of madness and charlatans of corrupt cheatingness, to another frizzled and fried, dipped and dyed section of Doctor Zak zealous zaniness. Zak here, and have I got some hilarious healers and stonking stealers for you this issue..

HARD DRIVIN'

This tip is from some bloke who insists on saying "You lucky thing, you" all the time – weird bugger. His name's Gary Colonaris and he hails from the fine city of London, so if you see him walking the streets, give him a bash on the head from me. Select manual gears, then accelerate to full speed (or "face-flapping" speed as he calls it – tut, tut), putting the car in neutral when you reach maximum whack. You will now, apparently, be invulnerable to crashes. I must try that one out in my '56 Chevrolet.

KICK OFF II

John Miller of Kilburn, West London has supplied a little hint for beating the CPU , by allowing you to sub the comp's players for complete amateurs. Press the F4-F5 or F9-F10 keys as though you were going to sub one of your own players. When the S12 or S14 sign appears, press the opposite function key to the one you pressed. Eg: If F4 is your sub then press F9, if F10 is yours press F5. Now whenever the ball goes out of play you can sub CPU players.

DUNGEON MASTER

Ben Sherman of Hertfordshire is possibly the only person in the country who could have worked out a tip for this preposterously difficult game.

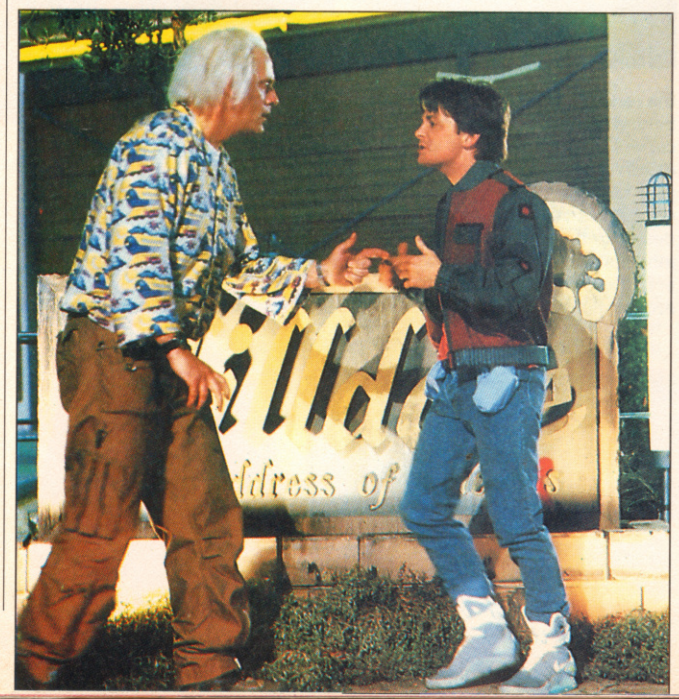
This is a method to turn a fighter, Hulk for instance, into a wizard with magic. Get a good priest and a load of potion bottles. Now get the priest to fill the bottles with the manna potion and put them in the fighter's bag ready to drink. Make the fighter drink them all and keep repeating the light spell as quickly as possible. Sooner or later you will see the message that "Hulk has gained a fighter level". Keep repeating the process until you are happy with your fighter's new wizard level. And on that note I must say "Kaboom!" (Zak disappears in a puff of smoke.)

SATAN

That cunning devil-worshipper, Ebeneezer McDonald of Lowesoft, has sent in this tip. Anything that can make this sod of a game any easier is alright by me. During game one, if you hold down ALT+1+D you'll get infinite lives. To get the same effect in game two, hold down ALT+2+M. Definite funny farm treatment for you Mr "Old" McDonald

BACK TO THE FUTURE II

Thank you to JR Hartley of Surbiton for this cheat giving you infinite energy. As you can see, fly fishing is not his only passion. Typing "It's the only neat thing to do" on the high score screen will produce the desired effect.



STORMLORD

Old Gazza's gonna be one hell of a big head this month, here's yet another tip from his probing pen. During play, if you hit "C" you will receive more lives than Tom and Jerry. Also, pressing "L" will allow you to skip through the levels. What a mean soldier of salacious surreptitiousness our Gary is.

DRAGON'S LAIR

Right after the credit sequence hold down the following to allow the computer to finish the game for you: "ESC", "R", "/", "L", "N" and "T". Frankly I can't see the point in paying 30 quid for a game and getting the computer to do all the work! I mean, what sort of raving lunatic would entertain such an idea.

ROCK AND ROLL

This is a fairly complex little cheat, are you sure that your little twisted minds can handle it? It allows you to jump to any level you want! Bloody cheats, the whole lot of you. When the Rainbow Arts title screen goes grey, type in the level number followed by XX then the level number backwards. Eg: for level nine type 09XX90, got that?

JOIN THE ZAK PACK

Blimey, those were a pile of crap tips if ever I saw some. Tell you what, why don't you do better. Send all those 16-bit sneaks and creaks to good old Doctor Zak's Hacks and Stacks, Raze, Unit 3, 7 Back Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LH. Winner of the best prize will send in the tip – or something like that.

Blersnezblup siggleworm.

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SUPER DUPA

Released in Japan on November 21, the long-awaited 16-bit console from Nintendo looks set to take on the world – leaving the Mega Drive and PC Engine in its wake. RAZE managed to gets its grubby hands on one of the brand spanking new machines. Does it herald a new age in console gaming, or is it another repackage?

This one has been cooking away at Nintendo for over three years now. Ever since its existence was rumoured, people have been waiting with tongues hanging out. The furore surrounding its launch is not surprising. After all, Nintendo are the world's largest console manufacturer, with an NES (known in Japan as the Famicom – FAMily COMputer) in one out of four American households. Until its launch, nearly everything about Nintendo's 16-bit Super Famicom was speculation: would it have Scart, was it true 16-bit, what was the resolution, how many colours? After getting our hands on the machine, RAZE now has the answers...

On opening up the Super Famicom, the first thing you notice is the custom chips – chips which have been designed to handle specific tasks. Custom chips are already used in machines like the PC Engine and have enhanced their host machine's capabilities immensely. The graphics chips and their CPU are all custom-made for Nintendo.

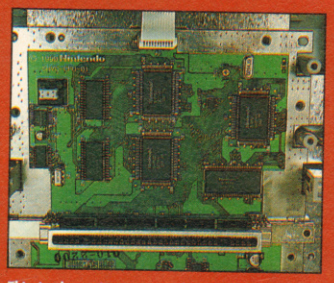
GREAT GRAPHICS ABOVE

The two graphics chips are packed with power. They generate 32,768 colours and allow up to 256 colours onscreen at any one time. Similarly, the 16-bit

custom CPU can do some pretty mean stuff. Handling 128 sprites at a time is just one of its tasks. Each sprite can be made up of 16 individual colours from a useable palette of 128. The hardware handling of sprites is superb; they can be rotated, zoomed, faded in and out, and fliped under hardware control. In realistic terms, this not only means that the the screen can be packed with bad guys and alien ships, but the objects can also spin around the screen and animate without any flicker or lock-up.

Also built into the graphics chips is a pretty neat mosaic effect. This little effect will, for instance, turn a picture of 64 colours into a single colour. It's the sort of effect that quiz shows use to scramble a picture of a person. The screen is also capable of splitting into four different parts with four tasks being carried out individually in each part. This sort of effect would be great for a car racing game or an RPG.

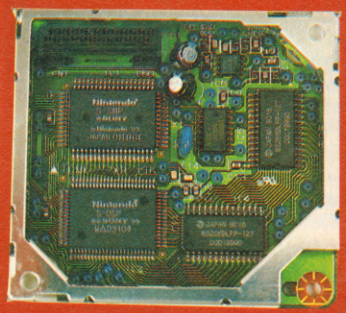
Interestingly there are two main screen resolutions: 256 x 224 and 512 x 448. The high resolution 512 x 448 mode is actually interlaced like a TV image. As you can imagine, the picture quality is stunning.



This is the main processor board showing all the custom Nintendo chips.

LET'S GET DIGITAL

The Super Famicom's sound board is just as impressive as its graphics. The machine contains an 8-bit sound chip to control every thing. It samples at 32 KHz and uses 16-bit Pulse Code Modulation to give crystal clear sound effects, such as speech through its eight-channel stereo.



A peek at the 8-bit, 8-channel stereo soundboard with 16-bit PCM. The Super Famicom can handle 8MIPS (Million Instructions Per Second) to give crystal clear sound and speech.

Strangely, there are three inter changeable processor clock speeds. The CPU rate is defined by the cartridge being used and can be either 1.79, 2.68 and 3.58 MHz. It seems very slow, but when you consider the main CPU won't actually be bothered with much – with graphics and sound chips handling all the complex stuff – it doesn't seem too bad.

Nintendo supply two controllers and they are a distinct improvement over the original Famicom pads. There's the usual four-way controller, plus A and B buttons, and X and Y buttons. On the top edge of the pad, there are two long buttons contoured with the outline of the controller, one marked "L" and the other marked "R". Presumably, these will be used for fast action games where up and down will not be required. The pads plug straight into the front of the SF, as does a multi-player adapter like those with the PC Engine.

GOING UNDERGROUND

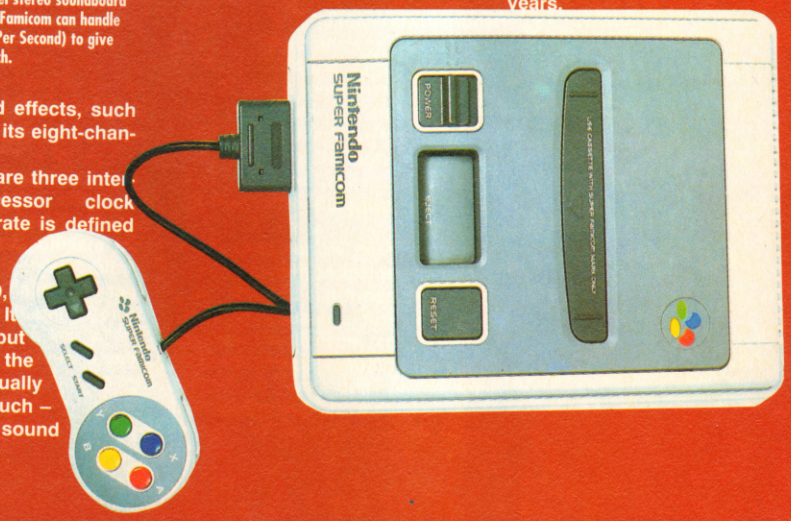
As with all consoles, the most interesting port is the "user port" where a rumoured CD-ROM drive could be attached, or perhaps an extra disk drive, or even another Super Famicom – there is no limit to the machine's expansion.

The machine has all the internal hardware to run any NES carts, but will certainly need an adaptor if they are to be fitted into the machine's sleek cartridge port.

Indeed, the machine's styling is very sleek all round. It is very dynamic and definitely for the Nineties, making even the Mega Drive look tacky, with its sleek lines and discreet pale grey colouring, not to mention two controllers instead of the one supplied with the Mega Drive.

At the moment, software is just starting to overtake current Mega Drive software in terms of quality. If the games are compared to the Mega Drive's software on its launch in Japan, it shows what potential the Super Famicom has.

● The Super Famicom reviewed here was kindly donated by Medlantic Hi-Tec (☎ 0455-291865). The current grey import price is around £300 and you get a free copy of *Super Mario World* with the machine. Nintendo UK won't be officially releasing the machine in the UK for at least two years.



SIGHTS ON CD

Paul Rigby spoke to Cinemaware's Dave Riordan about the implementation of Wings on compact disc. Chocks away, Paul

CD-I FLYER

When I heard that Cinemaware had a compact disc version of their fun game *Wings* in development I was intrigued to say the least. But what changes and improvement would, or could, be made upon the original Amiga version? Dave Riordan was quick to reveal all.

"There's quite a bit different. The whole concept of going out on missions will stay the same. From there it changes a lot because we have more room to do things with characters and, more importantly, we can have characters speak as well as music and sound effects. Because we can shoot real actors to play the characters we are pushing it much more towards an interactive movie version of, say, the Blue Max. The film was fairly accurate to history, although there were a few things they fudged up. Basically, they were trying to make you understand a certain period of the war and that there is more to war than a pilot in their plane who goes flying off.

The CD-I version of *Wings* will contain more character, integrate more sections and generally be more like a movie.

"We've built stories around the main characters of the squadron – there are about ten of them. They all have personal issues and backgrounds that may cause friction or may make some people good at something and bad at others. You'll also have to deal with stress from flying. If you try to commit people to too many missions they may crack up.

"If we are going to produce interactive movies you're going to have to have characters that have a background that tells you who they are and what they will do in certain situations. You also have to experience things in the game and be affected by those things – that's what we go to the movies for.

"CD-I allows us to build a movie around the *Wings* Amiga fun game. The trick is not to get the movie in the way so that it's not a fun game any more. We think we've figured out a formula for doing that. We haven't changed the way the aircraft fly at all. It will look better. The plane, instead of a graphic, will actually be a model that has been built and shot. The 3-D environment aircraft will be rendered better, too. There may be more topographical features on the ground. We are still wondering whether to include the strafing and bombing sequences or whether to merge those with the 3-D game. Merging the sub-games would bring a certain continuity to the product so that you're always looking at the same view."

What Cinemaware wants to hold onto is the 'fun' aspect of the game. So why CD-I and not CDTV? "It just happened that when we talked to American Interactive Media [the Philips/Polygram-funded group responsible for the US launch titles of CD-I], *Wings* was one game they took to. CDTV came along later and we've now got an opportunity to do a CDTV version of *TV Sports Football 2* (see last issue)."

There will possibly be a *Wings* version for the CDTV but because of the way the CD deals are being formulated in the States, there is a period of exclusivity to the company that initially funded the product.

"CD-I is a new machine. It will take us one or two products to work the kinks out in terms of what is really possible. *Wings* is not making use of the FMV (Full Motion Video) chips because there has been no guarantee to us from Philips that they will actually be in the player at launch, they may come later. Which is fine with us because everything we need to do on *Wings* will multimedia now – it's not a problem."

COMPACT STORIES

● One of the great things about Sierra, apart from *Leisure Suit Larry*, is their backing of IBM PC soundboards. In fact, you could argue that Sierra have been largely responsible for the success of the AdLib and Roland boards. Intriguing, therefore, that with the imminent release of their CD-ROM games, *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* and *King's Quest V*, there are strong rumours that Sierra may be gearing up to market a number of add-on CD-ROM machines for the PC. Could the Sierra Effect work a second time?

Will Larry be coming to CD soon? It could prove a popular format for such a see-dy character

● *Final Fantasy* is one of a few half-decent RPGs to appear on the Game Boy in the past year. It has already been released on the NES in the US and is up to *Final Fantasy IV* in Japan. The popularity of this game is such that Final Fantasy shops have opened in Japan. One of big attractions of these stores is a variety of CDs containing umpteen orchestral scores based on all four games.

There's no secret about Lucasfilm's continued CD support, but will we see *Monkey Island* on compact disc?

● Reports from the States say that Lucasfilm's recent release, *Secret of Monkey Island*, is being planned for release on FM Towns and CDTV.

● Rumours from Origin say of the conversion of *Ultima V* to the Nintendo and probably the CDTV. (Below)

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ZZEP

AMIGA ■ UGAM5 ■ SOFTVILLE

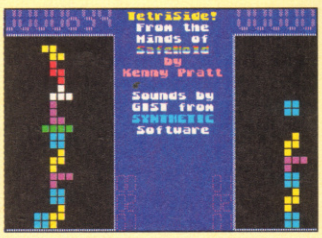
These high-tech fighter aircraft are all very nice, but they're far too noisy for some jobs. Go for a spot of recce over enemy territory and you'll be seen (or heard, to be more precise) in no time. Once they've spotted you, a quick SAM up the backside and you're done for.

In this delightful game from France, the object of the game is to fly into an underground enemy fortress in the government's latest high-tech spying aircraft – a zeppelin. Before you is a massive array of enemy weaponry including advanced radar detection systems, laser force fields and missile silos.

Zzep is a fun little game that boasts some impressive audio and visuals that are certainly of commercial quality.

85%

From top to bottom: *Give us a Break* and *Tetraside*.



TETRASIDE

ATARI ST ■ GAM103 ■ SOFTVILLE

No prizes for guessing what *Tetraslide* has cloned! Yep, you've guessed it, battleships... er, *Tetris*. You know the score by now – rotate shapes as they fall down the screen so that they connect together to form complete horizontal lines. As soon as a line is completed, they disappear, causing all blocks to tumble down into the vacant space.

There's not really a great deal you can say about a *Tetris* game, apart from the fact that they're damn addictive. If your software collection lacks a decent *Tetris* (shame on you), then check out *Tetraslide* now.

85%

GIVE US A BREAK

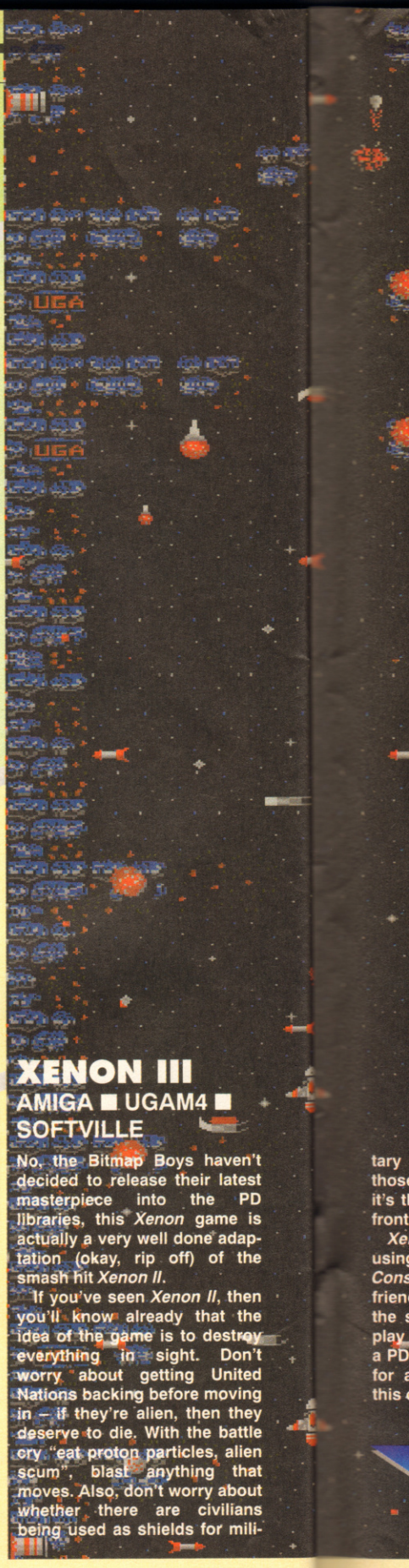
ATARI ST ■ GAM59 ■ SOFTVILLE

Trivial Pursuit is pretty old hat these days, but it's always nice to come across a variation on the theme. Based on the classic coin-operated game to be found in pubs up and down the country, *Give us a Break* is based around trivia snooker. Just like real snooker, the idea of the game is to score the highest break (number of points) by potting balls in series, starting with a red ball, then a colour, then a red ball, etc.

In this variation, balls are potted by answering questions correctly. You start with a nice easy question that, if answered correctly, puts down a red ball. You can then choose one of the colours. The higher the value of the colour, the harder the question, but the more points you receive if you answer it correctly.

For triv' fans, *Give us a Break* is an absolute must. The presentation is first rate and the questions original (although, thankfully, not too hard!). Highly recommended.

80%

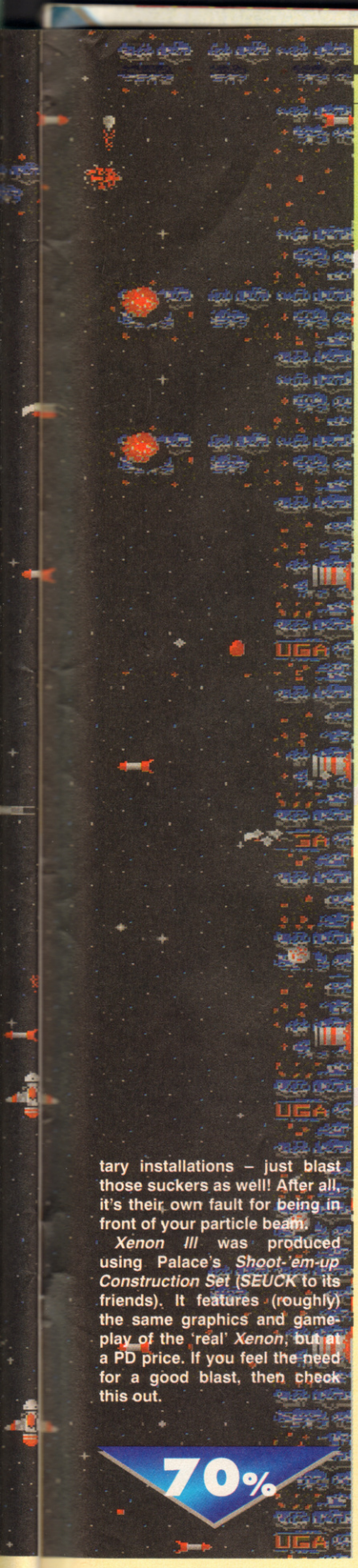


XENON III

AMIGA ■ UGAM4 ■ SOFTVILLE

No, the Bitmap Boys haven't decided to release their latest masterpiece into the PD libraries, this *Xenon* game is actually a very well done adaptation (okay, rip off) of the smash hit *Xenon II*.

If you've seen *Xenon II*, then you'll know already that the idea of the game is to destroy everything in sight. Don't worry about getting United Nations backing before moving in – if they're alien, then they deserve to die. With the battle cry "eat proton particles, alien scum", blast anything that moves. Also, don't worry about whether there are civilians being used as shields for mili-

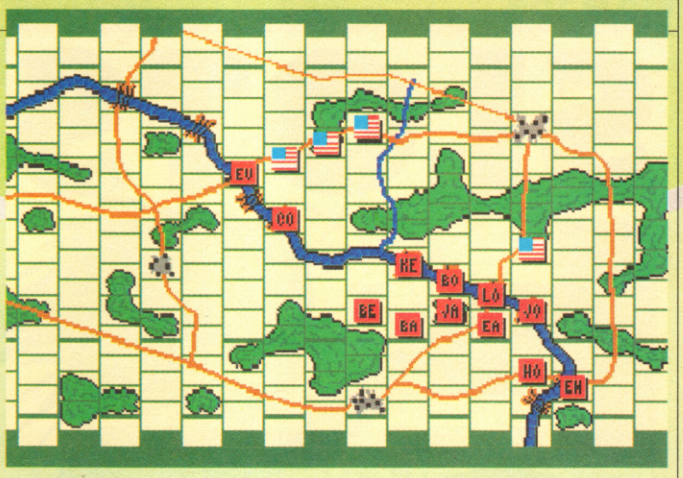


tary installations – just blast those suckers as well! After all, it's their own fault for being in front of your particle beam.

Xenon III was produced using Palace's *Shoot-'em-up Construction Set* (SEUCK to its friends). It features (roughly) the same graphics and gameplay of the 'real' *Xenon*, but at a PD price. If you feel the need for a good blast, then check this out.

70%

Recreate the battle of the First Run in this great strategy war game set during the American civil war. The screen shows a map of the area in which you must pitch battle. The object: capture all enemy towns.



BULL CREEK

AMIGA ■ MEGA GAMES 4 ■ GTS

The American civil war was certainly no laughing matter, but it's great material for wargame writers (witness *North and South*). This game recreates the battle of First Bull Run, the first major conflict of the civil war. With the country divided, you control either the Union (north) or the Confederates (south) in one of the bloodiest battles of the entire war.

The screen shows a map of the battlefield divided into squares. The green patches represent woods, blue lines are rivers and black dots are towns. Bull Run is the large river that divides the map in half. It is only crossable at fords, denoted by black lines across the river. Your playing pieces are the red ('Feds) or blue (Union) squares, each marked with a two-letter identity code. Enemy units are the unmarked flags.

The object of the game is to capture an enemy town. The town must be occupied throughout a turn to win. The Union player has only one town to defend – Centreville, in the north-east corner of the map. However, the poor old 'Feds have two towns – Manassas to the south and New Market to the west. If neither player wins by the 7:00pm turn, the game ends and the computer decides who wins, based on relative casualties and how close each side came to their objective.

70%

SNIFBURK

AMIGA ■ UGAM4 ■ SOFTVILLE

Spots aren't funny, right? When I was a lad, I suffered terribly from the old zits. Just when I had managed to fix up a date with the most beautiful girl in school, my entire face would explode into a collage of whiteheads and dribbling puss – it was as if someone up there wanted me to die lonely.

If, like me, you suffered (or are suffering) terribly from the symptoms of puberty, then *Snifburk* could bring a 'spot' of light relief. Armed with your trusty bottle of rapid-fire Biactol (all trademarks acknowledged etc), you must zap those zits as soon as they appear on the face of the spotty person onscreen. If you fail to clean away enough of the little blighters, poor old pizza face explodes under the pressure of all that pent up puss.

65%

PLAY

PD SUPPLIERS

There's a plethora of companies selling public domain games, demos and utilities. Here's just a small collection the suppliers holding Amiga and Atari ST disks. Look out for IBM PC discount disks in future issues of RAZE.

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SLOTS HOT

Suzi Uki's

For a steamy session with RAZE's queen of silicon sleeze, put a coin in the slot, lie back and pray for many extended plays. If there's dirt lurking behind closed arcade industry doors, Suzy Uki will dig it up.

Konban wa, English people. I find that night time is the right time, so excuse me if I have gleeted you and it's early morning. I've had some hot machines thrust on me this month. Mmmm... machines with big joysticks, double-ups, throbbing hydraulics, vibrating mechanisms... there seems no end to the pleasure I've received in the hot, sweaty, steamy arcades this past month. Before you get in an excited frenzy and share my experiences, consider this: an article published recently in a French (oooh, how I love their pleasure baguettes) trade magazine InterAutomatique reckons the earliest recorded pinball machine was described in the Charles Dickens classic The Pickwick Papers. Dickens describes the game as a sort of bagatelle game crossed with a type of billiards. But enough about what excites me in life – what turns you on, big boy? Perhaps I can interest you in some of the following hot slots...

SKULL & CROSS-BONES

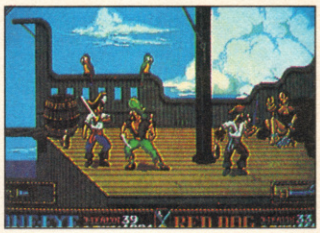
Atari Games

Ooooh me hearties! What's this from Atari Games? None other than *Skull & Crossbones,* a swashbuckling tale of action on the high seas. Yes, indeed, Jim Lad (or whatever your name is), you, me and a playmate can dress up in kinky pirate gear and do all the things bronzed seafaring heroes do. Like drinking, rubbing private parts with merfolk and riding on waves of loooove. And then there are boring things like searching for treasure.

You've got to fight through screen after screen of land-lubbing foes who want to put a stop to your acts of indecency (that's the trouble with this world; there are too many party poopers). Back in the good old days a pirate could at least look forward to a fair trial (followed by a quick hanging, regardless of the outcome), but these foes are more in favour of quick, short, sharp treatment (try saying that when you've had too much saki) – a sword in the spleen. Oh, Bluebeard, where are you now? You can thrust your long hard sword into me any time.

It's not just the King's men you have to contend with. No, the good news is that there are even more people after your body. It makes me quiver just thinking about it. The real thing is an experience not to miss. Indeed, if pirates from other factions get hold of you they will ravage you until you're black, blue and very sore between the legs.

If you can fight through all these dastardly foes, the rewards are plentiful. Of course there's the usual food, drink and mountains of treasure, but if you save a wench from her captives, you'll end up black, blue and sore between your legs. Either way, you win. What a game!



Yo, ho, yo ho – a pirating life's for me. There's booze, bullion, Bluebeard and bonking. Yo, ho, yo ho...

SUPER SPACE INVADERS

Taito

Perfectionists will insist that Atari's *Pong* was the game that started the revolution, but no one can argue that *Space Invaders* was the game that started the arcade craze. Back in the days when I didn't know the sort of pleasure that could be extracted

BUST OR BROKE

Sexperts everywhere will love Dyna Co's new *Cherry Master* video fruit machine. The gameplay is pretty standard, but the cherries you sometimes get on screen aren't always what you might expect. There's the usual money pay out obviously, but there's an extra incentive for those players who achieve the higher value combinations of fruits: digitised images of rather attractive young ladies showing off their cherries. The images range from fairly tame kinky underwear to the kind of full frontals that would give Mary Whitehouse a heart attack!

Whether you agree with this kind of blatant exploitation or not is up to you, but you've got to admit Dyna's production development people certainly know how to get peoples' attention. Me, I give it the thumbs up. After all, I expect to be titilated when I play on throbbing machines with powerful hydraulics. So why shouldn't my male chums get equal satisfaction from a few coin-ops offering hot slots in unexpected places.

Cherry Master (left) in its watch-out-Mary-Whitehouse-is-about mode. And, right, enjoying one of its more intimate moments.

Pop pills with Dr Mario; available on Nintendo Playchoice systems soon. Dr Mario – a Tetris-like clone – is the only game that will increase your bottom line.

from hot slots, people literally queued to get a chance to shoot wave after wave of marauding black and white aliens. The technology – like my finger work – was pretty crude then, but the action was fast and furious.

Sadly, the days of *Space Invaders* are gone. As arcade goers poured more and more money into arcades, the coin-op industry developed the throbbing hardware available today. Regardless of how playable *Space Invaders* is, there's no escaping the fact that it doesn't stand a chance against today's arcade offerings, although its influence can be seen in virtually all arcade blast-'em-ups.

If you yearn for the good old days, Taito have some good news for you. The company have just launched *Super Space Invaders,* a modern adaptation which could breathe new life into this ageing classic. Featuring the same addictive gameplay that made *Space Invaders* such a hit, the game has been revamped virtually beyond recognition.

The gameplay remains virtually unchanged, so there's no complicated controls to suss-out – just move left and right, blasting as you go. Thankfully the alien attack patterns have changed, so you won't die of boredom after the 110th screen.

SPACE GUN

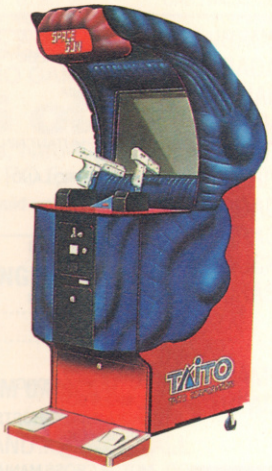
Taito

Any game that features a gun with a long, thick barrel is great by me. Have you ever explored all the possible ways of being fulfilled by a gun? Just rub it up, pull the trigger and watch it shoot off in a frenzy. It'll drive you wild.

Space Gun's a sort of *Operation Wolf* meets *Aliens* for up to two players. You, in the role of a space mercenary, must penetrate (wow, clam down, boy) a space station overrun by xenomorphes. As always, the object of the game is to rescue the civvie colonists from the clutches of slime dribbling aliens. How? Subtle persuasion, that's how. Problem is these aliens aren't overly keen on diplomatic discussion, so you've got to talk in a language they understand – proton particle through the brain.

You start the game at the top level of the space station complex. As you get nearer and nearer the heart of the complex, the aliens get tougher and require more shots before they'll give up the game and explode in a shower of green slime. Aren't you glad you've got a big throbby gun? There's the usual selection of extra weapons which can be picked up along the way to make the process of dispatching aliens that bit simpler.

Every so often you'll come across colonists who can be freed with a well placed shot from your weapon. Caution is needed however, as it's all too easy to waste them in the thick of battle. After each stage is complete, there's a body count in which you gain extra points for each colonist rescued.



For double the satisfaction, pick up both pulsating Space Gun shooters at once. The experience is something else.

THUNDER JAWS

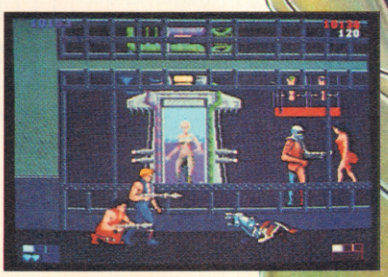
Atari Games

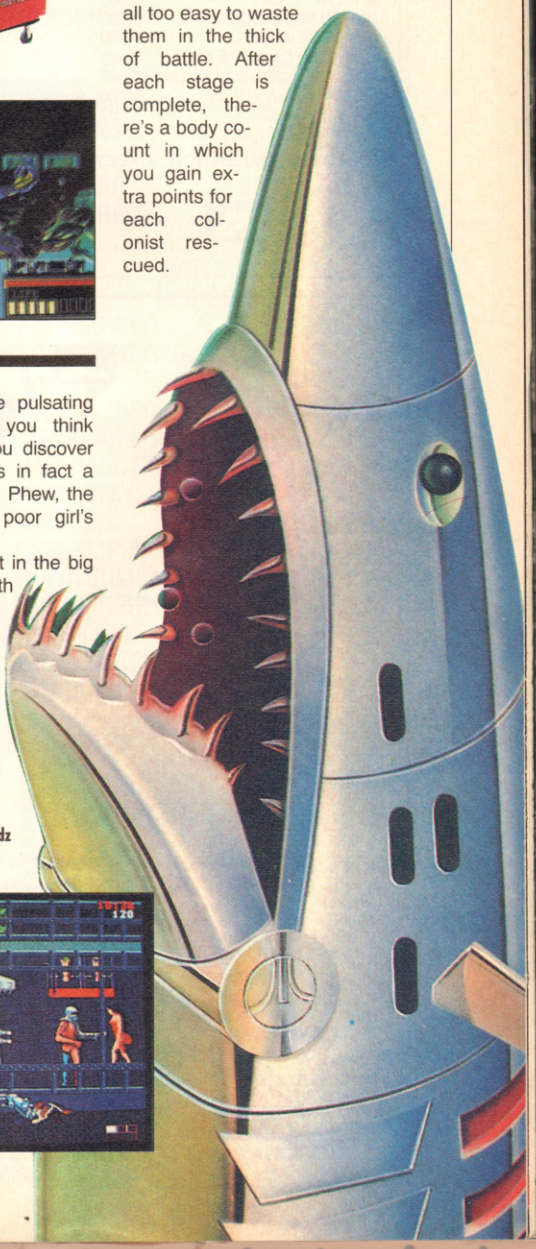
Shark! That's a word that can put terror into even the most confident of swimmers. Me, I don't mind being broadsided by such a beast. Its huge, powerful jaws and long nose mean it can get into the naughtiest of crevices. You may think your backstroke is pretty slick, your breaststroke a real turn on, and your doggy style an unbeatable experience – well what are you waiting for, big boy? Experiment with me. Er, yes, where was I – no matter how good you are at swimming, it's a sure bet that a Great White could out swim even Duncun Goodhew. A shark's ravenous appetite for human flesh is unstoppable. My flesh is always available: to man, machine or beast.

The latest release from Atari games is *Thunder Jaws,* an underwater adventure which sees you up against mutant mantas, bionic wolves (what are they doing underwater?), lizard ladies and the great white shark. You're not up against any old shark; Thunder Jaws is a cybernetic shark. Double pulsating pleasure – just when you think you're riding a beast, you discover the thing beneath you is in fact a vibrating mechanized toy. Phew, the things this does for a poor girl's mind...

The action isn't just set in the big drink. Your divers unearth the truth about Thunder Jaws, which leads them to an underwater city full of horrible subterrainian baddies. Then it's onto a place under the sea itself... Mmmm, there's nothing better than a sea bed.

Beautiful maidens bare all for the ladz after their heroic exploits.





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BUDGET BLITZ

What with petrol prices soaring and the poll tax, er, community charge going up next year, Sir Ivor Tightwallet has a lot to answer for. Taking ambiguous answers in one hand and Geoffrey Howe posters in the other, Sir Ivor surveys the latest cheap chortlers

SKYSTRIKE+

ATLANTIS ■ SIDEVIEW SHOOT-'EM-UP

This game was originally played by our defence minister, Mr Y. Notnukem, and he gave it his personal recommendation – which is not saying much.

The game takes place just after World War II has ended, in 1946. However, there is one small part of the world that is still feuding, namely the two nations of Stosic and Zodvia.

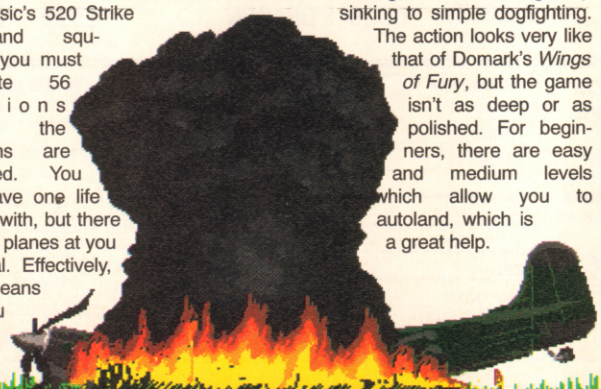
There are some great explosions and some pretty nifty backdrops. The flick-screen scrolling is annoying though. Sound consists of a few title tunes and some splerty in-game effects.

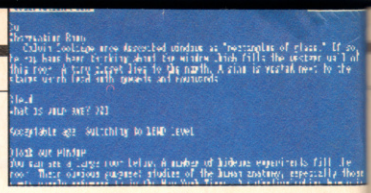
£6.99 ▼ OUT NOW
ATARI ST
70%

During a quieter moment in *Skystrike+* you visit the local architectural sights of interest.

The Zodvian empire has once again invaded the peace-loving community of Stosic. However, it's pay back time, and the Stosics are dishing out the medicine. As a member of the Stosic's 520 Strike Command squadron, you must complete 56 missions before the Zodvians are banished. You only have one life to play with, but there are five planes at you disposal. Effectively, this means that you must bail out or belly land if you're to survive a bad encounter and use another plane.

The 56 missions can range from train bombing to tank shooting, ship sinking to simple dogfighting. The action looks very like that of Domark's *Wings of Fury*, but the game isn't as deep or as polished. For beginners, there are easy and medium levels which allow you to autoland, which is a great help.





Above: *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* swinging its stuff on the Amiga. Tame, suggestive or lewd. Which one do you think it is?

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS

INFOCOM/ MASTERTRONIC ■ COMIC ADVENTURE

Ever fancied a life of unadulterated sin and debauchery? Well, down at the local Synbyn Club, where all good MPs go to cash in their luncheon vouchers, this game is all the rage at the moment.

The year is 1936 and the Leather Goddesses from the planet of Phobos are planning an attack on Earth. Their objective is to infiltrate the community and set up their own personal pleasure palace right here on Earth. Obviously, being a well-brought up young man, you can't let things like this happen.

The game can be played in three modes: tame, suggestive and lewd. Which level you play on depends what you enter as your age – and whether your parents are watching you play it!

You must escape the lusting advances of the goddesses and then search the universe in order to collect the parts that can be assembled into a weapon that will defeat the sex-crazed nymphet.

Sounds a bit strange, doesn't it? Well, there's no doubt that this is one of the weirdest games I've come across. *Leather Goddesses* is full of humour, so don't be put off because it's a text adventure, everyone will find something to excite them. The

It's about time the ST had some budget adventures and there's no better way to into the genre than with a good ol' Infocom romp.

£9.99 ▼ OUT NOW
ATARI ST
62%

Despite being text-only, the prose can build up a seductive atmosphere. All the scenes are described in depth, leaving nothing to the imagination.

£9.99 ▼ OUT NOW
AMIGA
82%

Who needs graphics when the text is this good. In fact, I prefer the lack of pictures, it means you can conjure up your own personal representation of the scene described (depending on how tame, suggestive or lewd *you* are).

£9.99 ▼ OUT NOW
IBM PC
83%

game's not too difficult either so the game should appeal to all types of player, and for just £9.99 it's an experience that can't be missed.

TRACKSUIT MANAGER 90

ELECTRONIC ZOO

The original *Tracksuit Manager* allowed you to take an international team of your choice through the European Championships and onto the World Cup. The sheer depth of the game made it great to play on the old 8-bit machines, and it's a pleasure to see a revamped version of the game on the 16-bits.

The new version features enhanced graphics and a completely updated player database – no more Paul Mariner playing for England (did he ever?). You choose your team, the tactics and everything else a manager has to control.

It still amazes me how these games are so darned popular. As good as any version.

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ATARI ST
60%

Graphics and sound mean little in this sort of game, it's depth that counts, and *Tracksuit Manager* isn't short of that.

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AMIGA
61%

This is without doubt the best budget football management game on the PC!

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IBM PC
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WHEELS OF FIRE

DOMARK ■ COMPILATION

Here's one for all the boy racers among you, four driving/racing games in one package. As the alternative Government treasury minister I can honestly say this is this sort of economy that I approve of. The tyre-screeching package contains four disks with *Chase HQ* and *Hard Drivin'* on one disk, *Power Drift*, and *Turbo Out Run* greedily taking up the other two disks.

Chase HQ

Chase HQ has been out on practically every format, it's even coming out on the Game Boy in February. The game puts you in the role of Algernon (sic), a city cop who must drive around the suburbs and highways in pursuit of drug dealers. At the start of each mission you are given a quick briefing over the carphone by Nancy at home base. From there it's off to work you go, racing around the streets *Out Run*-style in a Porsche 928.

Hard Drivin'

When it was first released, *Hard Drivin'* was probably more infamous for its bugs than its playability. Still, time has told and it is now one of the best 3-D driving games around. The course is split into two tracks which must both be completed in a fast time if you're to challenge the Photon Phantom.

It's hard to fault the compilation. Although the Atari ST versions weren't up to the Amiga ones – especially *Power Drift* – you'd be hard pushed to find a better racing compilation to use as a substitute.

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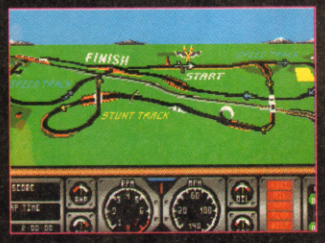
ATARI ST
87%



As Tightwallet draws into view in *Hard Drivin'*, other road users literally jump to get out of the way. The first obstacle on the stunt track: the bridge. Don't go over 60mph or you'll need a new paint job.

Power Drift

This was one of the biggest arcade games you could imagine – in size and stature. You choose from 12 drivers and must race your way through 27 championship circuits. The courses are are strange mixture of on and offroad tracks, all of them undulating and twisting through the countryside. Although the 16-bit computer versions aren't the best available, any driving compilation without *Power Drift* wouldn't be worth its salt.

Turbo Out Run

The sequel to Sega's smash arcade game *Out Run* takes you on a trek across America, through three major cities, each split into four areas. It seems as though your female companion from the first escapade has done a runner and jumped in with some guy in a Porsche! Little does he know that you've got a new turbo fitted to your recently serviced Ferrari F40, and there ain't no way that some boy racer's gonna nick your doll without a fight.

As is with most compilations, everyone's already got at least one of the games on this anthology. Still, whatever's left is bound to get you reaching for the dark shades and Beach Boys tape.

£29.99 ▼ OUT NOW
AMIGA
89%

ADVANCED FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR

CODE MASTERS ■ PUB GAME

Budget kings Code Masters bring a world of vice and gambling to the naive 16-bit processors of the Amiga and Atari ST. Well, actually I was lying about the vice, but you know what us MPs are like.

This game pits your amassed forces of good against the evil Fruit Empire. Using skill and judgement you must arrange the Fruitarian forces into lines of the same race. Doing this will bring you untold riches and take you further into the Fruitarian world.

If you fail to get conquer the forces of the evil, you'll end up spending innumerable amounts of cash trying to get your ship back into action.

Actually, the game isn't that exciting. What you have here is your basic fruit machine, as seen in a pub near you. All the simple features are there – three wheels, normal and feature holds, nudges, bonuses – but, as can be said with all fruit machine sims, the game content isn't up to much more than a day's play.

With the exception of the Amstrad GX4000, computers are a dull old box of tricks. They can never match the flashing lights and "groovy" sounds of the arcade fruit machine. And then there's the fact that you can't win any money on a computer fruit machine sim. In fact, they're the budget market's strangest genre.

£6.99 ▼ OUT NOW

AMIGA

50%

Sim City II? Super RoboCop? Test Drive IV? No, it's... (answers on a postcard)

CONFLICT

MASTERTRONIC ■ GULF TIE-IN

What with the current crisis in the Middle East, the Foreign Affairs minister has advised me not to feature any games that might inflame the situation. After all, all good Arabs read RAZE. You can read all about RAZE in the Koran, page one, after the bit about Salman Rushdie – you can't miss it. Anyway, I'm never one to take advice so here it is.

Ever wanted to play the Prime Minister of Israel – er, well, perhaps not. But whether you have Middle Eastern aspirations or not, *Conflict* is just the sort of megalomanical wargame that goes down well in the Commons.

Playing the role of Israel's new Prime Minister, you enter the Gulf crisis at its worst, in 1997. Everyone is taking sides as one country after another gets invaded. You control the military and civil running of Israel, the country right in the middle of the conflict. It's hard to tell who's on your side, so treat everyone with caution. Diplomacy is a dying art, so if that doesn't work against your little Arab neighbours, just bomb them.

Your ultimate aim is to invade all the countries in the area and take control of the rich resources held within them. While being friendly to one country, you can initiate covert action, infiltrate the government and assassinate the country's leader. But be careful how you treat your own subjects, as this abrupt end could fall on you too.

While a-wheeling and a-dealing in the cut and thrust world of politics you must not forget to build up your own country's defences. Not only does this mean placing armies around your borders, but also building up a large stock of nuclear weapons, not to use as a weapon but as a threat. But if things do get a bit messy, you may have to resort to the dirtiest tactic of all – nuke 'em.

Totally menu-driven action makes the game a cinch to get into. Graphics are limited to a few static screens displaying weapons and maps, while sound is severely lacking. Good idea, not so good execution.

£4.99 ▼ OUT NOW

AMIGA

70%

Identical to the Amiga version. Again lacking any presentation, but helped by the simple menu system.

£4.99 ▼ OUT NOW

ATARI ST

70%

You're never short of a military strategy on the PC. Still, this one's cheaper the yer average PC fare and a darn sight easier to get into.

£4.99 ▼ OUT NOW

IBM PC

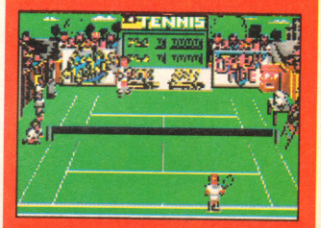
70%

BUDGET BITZ

◆ As well as the reviewed *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, Mastertronic are rereleasing *Wishbringer, Zork 1, Planetfall* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. They're all great Infocom text adventures and just £9.99 each.

◆ Code Masters have a busy few months ahead of them. You can expect *MiG-29* very soon. Also, that lovable egg Dizzy is back with more adventures entitled *Fast Food Dizzy* and *Fantasy World Dizzy*. Two other titles planned are a couple of spoofs called*Sword and the Rose* and *Spells and Scorcery*.

◆ Code Masters are also moving into the compilation market with the release of *Quatro Sports* and *Quatro Arcade*. The sports compilation features *Italia 90, Pro Tennis Simulator, Advanced Ski Simulator* and *BMX Simulator*. The *Arcade* line up is yet to be confirmed but both will be reviewed soon.



◆ Great news for arcade fans as Virgin Mastertronic announce the rerelease of four classic games on one fantastic compilation. Expect*Double Dragon, Gemini Wing, Xenon II* and *Silkworm* on *Edition One*. For £25 you can relive the chart-toppers all over again.

◆ Chartbusting *RoboCop* (with over 100 weeks in the chart) is set to appear on a compilation soon. The Ocean spectacular called Hollywood Collection contains *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Batman, Ghostbusters II* and *RoboCop*. What a line up!

◆ Digital Integration's quality has never been in doubt – witness *ATF* and *F-16 Combat Pilot* – but did you know that their budget branch, Action 16, has four new hits ready for release. They're familiar names, but you won't have seen them for a while: *Hostages, Comsic Pirates, Rotor* and *Maya*.

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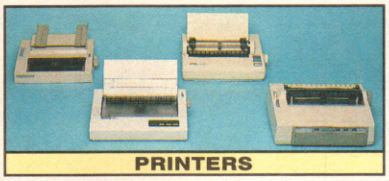
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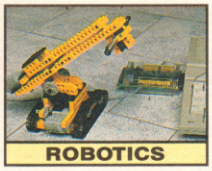
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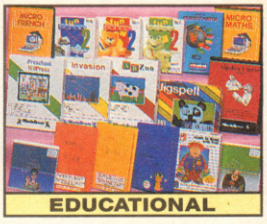
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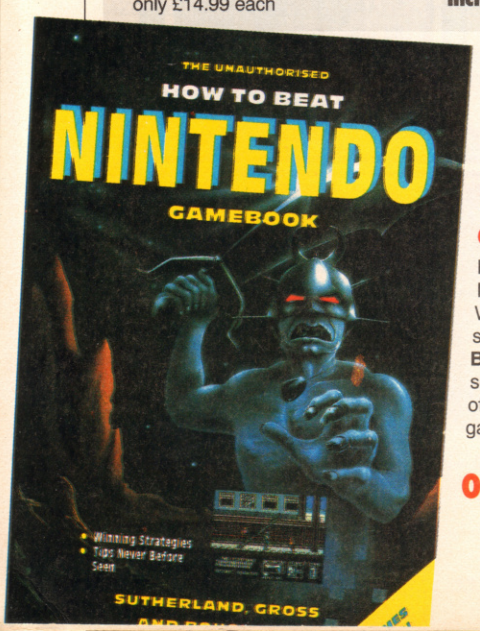

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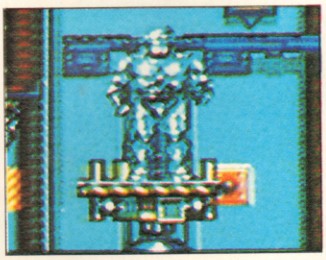

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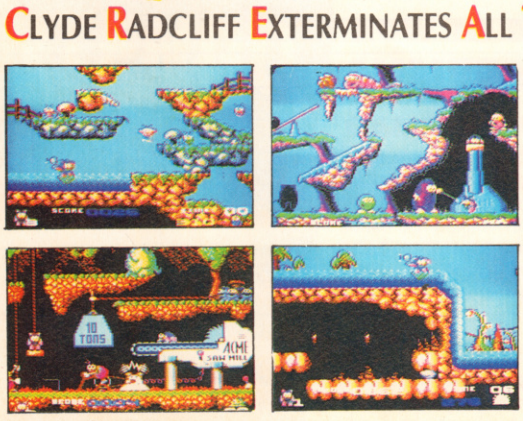

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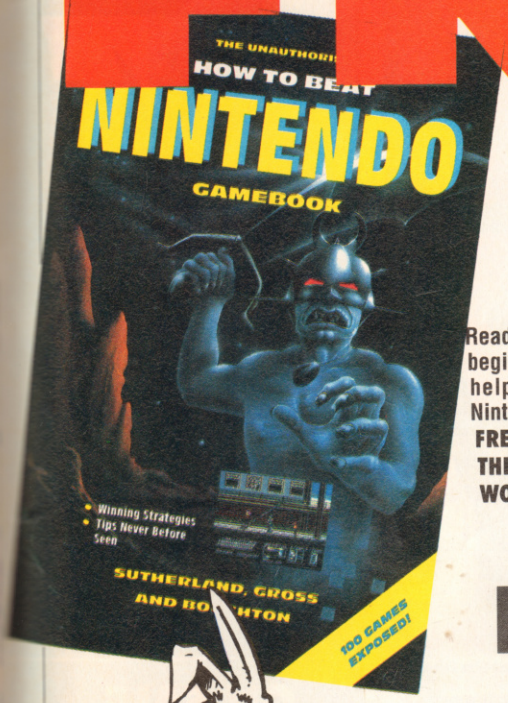

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B. Lynx.
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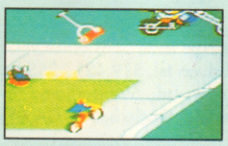

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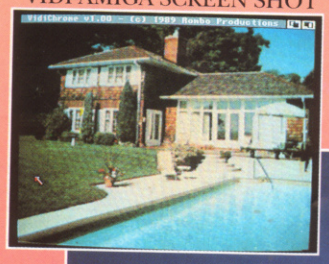

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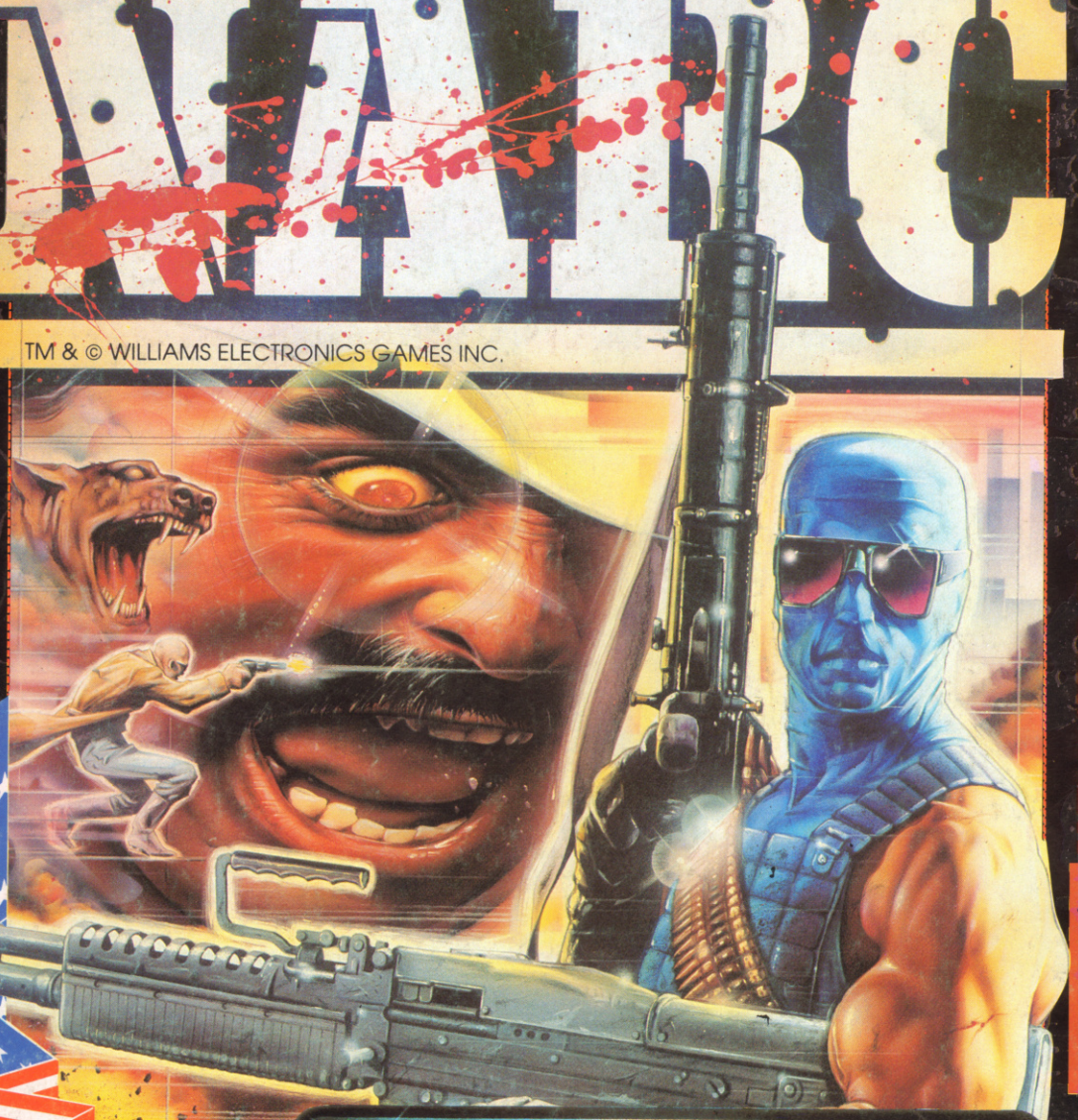

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